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THE EARLY HEROES OF ISLAM

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PREFACE

"There is
One great Society alone on earth,
The noble Living and the noble Dead."

Wordsworth.

Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.

Longfellow.

Golden deeds always exercise an elevating influence irrespective of the age and clime in which they are performed. Therefore a record, however defective, of the sublime lives of the Prophet of Arabia and of his four immediate successors, namely Hadzrat Abu Bakr, Omar Othman and Ali, known as the Kholafai-Rashedin (the principal representatives) cannot but be interesting and instructive to readers of all creed and colour. Endeavour has been made to give in these brief sketches the salient features of each life based on reliable material and hence doubtful annals have been omitted. As the history of the birth of Islam was written about a century later, creditable accounts for the lives are necessarily meagre.

Besides the lives of the Prophet and the four great personages, who form the central figures, this book naturally contains short notices of a galaxy of great men, who flourished in Arabia in that notable age; such as the famous general Khalid bin Walid, who may aptly be called the Napoleon of Arabia, the kind-hearted Abu Obaida, who commanded the army in Syria, Saad bin Waqqas. Mothanna and Numan, all of whom took a leading part in the conquest of Irak and Persia, and the astute politician, Amr-al-Aas, the conqueror of Egypt.

The lives further cover the history of the miraculous birth and the wonderfully rapid growth of Islam and its temporary political stagnation. I shall now briefly notice the historical facts.

Hadzrat Mohammed was born in a society deeped in idolatry and superstition and addicted to robbery, gambling, drinking and other vices. His sensitive and sublime nature was deeply stirred by the prevailing ungodliness and vice. For this reason he used to ponder over the matter and gave himself up to meditation. One day in the midst of his meditation, the divine voice called him to the duty of regenerating humanity. Responding to this call, he began to preach, amidst filthy abuses and implacable persecution, the religion of one great God and denounced the idols of his nation and

their vices. He further formulated a code of noble and pure moral rules. His heroic perseverance amidst these difficulties and his selflessness attracted to him a band of worthy souls, who professed his religion. Hence the Koreish, his tribesmen, thought of gaining him over by a tempting bribe. They proposed to make him their king and offered him a fortune greater than what was possessed by any of them. "But worldly position and fortune were nothing to the lofty and unselfish soul that was burning with a desire to regenerate humanity. The Prophet rejected the offer and pressed on his mission. The Koreish redoubled their persecution, so he advised his noble but small band of disciples to migrate to Abyssinia." Erelong the religion took root in the holy soil of Medina, whither the Moslems migrated. Here Hadzrat Mohammed laid the foundation of a Moslem state and had to take up arms in self-defence.

At Bedr, the Marathon of the Moslems, he defeated the Koreish who outnumbered his followers by 3 to 1. Within a short space of about 10 years, from the migration, or the "Flight" to Medina in June of 622 A. D., to the death of the Prophet in 632 A. D., the whole of Arabia professed Islam and acknowledged him as the ruler of the country. Though his words were law and the government appeared to be benevolent despotism, it really contained germs

of democracy and developed as such, during the rule of his four immediate successors. In spite of considerable wealth, he lived a very simple life. He and his family had at times to fast, because he used to spend his money for the support of the poor and other public purposes. All Moslems were treated as equals.

This brief period of nearly 10 years' rule "was not sufficient to effect a permanent change in the character of the wild, adventurous and uncurbed Arabs. The daily prayers, the fast of the Ramazan, the abstinence from wine and the tithes were irksome to them. Even in the lifetime of the Prophet himself, a few gifted but unscrupulous persons pretended to be inspired beings." Hence on the death of the Prophet apostacy and rebellion broke out throughout Arabia. Hadzrat Abu Bakr, who was elected by the citizens of Medina to be the Caliph or representative of the Prophet had thus to face a very difficult situation at the outset of his rule. Guided more by loyalty to his late master and less by prudence, he adopted a bold but risky policy. Fortunately for Islam he was rewarded with success. During his short rule of 2 years and a quarter, he not only pacified Arabia and brought it back to the fold of Islam, but extended its bounds to Palestine, southern Syria and Iraq. Under him all Moslems enjoyed the utmost freedom and the surplus revenue

was divided equally among them. On his deathbed he with characteristic disinterestedness nominated Hadzrat Omar, the greatest of all the Caliphs, as his successor.

Like all the early heroes of Islam Hadzrat Omar was quite unselfish, but he was noted specially for his impartiality, his iron will, his moral courage and his severity in maintaining discipline. He would punish his provincial governors for the slightest fault. Hence the pen of Omar was more dreaded than the sword. These virtues were the secret of his success. "Within a brief but glorious reign of 10 years and a half, he humbled the proud and mighty Roman empire and overturned the Persian throne with a rapidity never witnessed before in the history of the world. He extended Moslem rule from Tripoli on the west to the borders of Baluchistan on the east. He organised a powerful and efficient army; placed the land revenue on a fixed and equitable basis; constructed roads, canals, irrigation works, rest houses and mosques on an extensive scale; secured purity in the administration of justice; provided free education and diffused the knowledge of the holy Koran and Islamic laws; established in practice the equality and brotherhood of all Moslems; granted pensions to the old and decrepit; and guaranteed religious toleration and other privileges to the non-Moslems." Even the most advanced states

of modern times cannot excel the above record. The noble and useful career of Hadzrat Omar was cut short by the hand of an assassin in 23 A. H. or 645 A. D.

On his deathbed, Hadzrat Omar named a committee of 6 persons for the election of a Caliph from amongst themselves. As a result Hadzrat Othman was elected Caliph. He was a kind-hearted man of large fortune; but like his predecessors he lived a very simple life and spent his money in charity. "On account of a verse in the holy Koran, he considered it a sacred duty to help his relatives. Hence he put them in charge of important public offices and gave them large sums of money out of the public treasury. Taking advantage of his kind and mild nature, his unworthy relatives, several of them were governors of provinces, committed acts of high-handedness and injustice, which caused discontent."

There were other causes also to increase its volume. "Tribal jealousy was one of the principal traits of the character of the Arabs. The noble influence of Islam had not sufficient time to eradicate it root and branch. Traces of the venom remained in the national character and were visible in a long standing dispute between the houses of Hashim and Omaiya.

* * * *

—In addition to the jealousy between the two rival Koreish families, Arab tribes of Bani Bakr,

Qodzaa, Kinda, Rabia and others whose swords were mainly instrumental in conquering Chaldæa and the Provinces of Persia, looked with disfavour the prominent position of the Koreish, whose members practically governed the empire." Again "by the middle of Hadzrat Othman's Caliphate there was comparative peace. The expedition from Africa returned with success and the rebellion in Persia was quelled for the time being. The Arabs had now enough leisure; in fact they had no occupation when not engaged in war. Hadzrat Omar interdicted them from holding land except in rare cases. The state stipends and spoils of war were sufficient to maintain them in comfort and in good many cases with luxury. They were therefore not under the necessity of working for their livelihood. Unfortunately none seems to have thought of finding any useful occupation, except war, for the nation, nor were the circumstances favourable to the growth of such an idea. In the next place the Arabs were accustomed to freedom of speech and were imbued with something like communistic ideas. The institutions of Hadzrat Omar, who had not made the least difference between the most powerful and able governor and the humblest Arab and who had punished the slightest delinquencies on the part of a governor, made the people realise their strength. Under the above circumstances, the

Arabs began to criticise even petty faults of the governors and of the Caliph himself." In this way the discontent spread and ultimately a group of malcontents from Kufa, Bussorah and Egypt demanded the dismissal of the relatives of the Caliph or his resignation. Though the Caliph was willing to investigate specific charges against his governors and to punish them if found guilty, he did not agree to dismiss them wholesale or to hand them over to the blind fury of the rebels. He could not also conscientiously resign his sacred office, as he did not consider himself incompetent. Hence the rebels blockaded the house of the venerable Caliph who had not even taken the precaution to defend himself lest there were bloodshed. On the contrary he was willing to sacrifice his own life. In 35 A. H or 656 A.D. the rebels put the defenceless Caliph to the sword, while he was reading the holy Koran.

About a week after the murder of Hadzrat Othman, Hadzrat Aly, at the earnest entreaty of some leading rebels and some prominent citizens, consented to accept the office of the Caliph in order to prevent the evils of anarchy. In spite of his intelligence, learning, wisdom, honesty, bravery and selflessness, his rule was unfortunately not successful, because he hated diplomacy. For this very reason, on his accession to the Caliphate, he decided to dismiss

Muaviya and other governors of his predecessor for their improper conduct, though he knew fully well that the course he adopted was highly perilous. The path to righteousness is always rough and difficult. This bold but just step landed him in civil war and in a conflict with Muaviya, the powerful governor of Syria. It also placed him in the hands of the fickle, unruly and fanatic Bedouin population of Kufa and Bussorah, who were jealous of Koreishite supremacy. Even with this bad material he managed to gain a signal victory against Muaviya at Siffin. But the diplomacy of Amr-al-Aas and the unruliness of his followers deprived him of the fruits of that victory. He had also to fight with a section of his followers, the Kharijis who broke into open rebellion. Still he did not yield, but maintained an unequal contest to the end of his life. This heroic stand extorts our admiration. His mild but just rule based on the absolute equality of man was unsuitable to the then progress of the Arabs, nay it is unsuitable even to many of the best and most advanced nations of the present day. This is the root cause of his failure as a Caliph. Truly it has been remarked that he came before his time.

A Khariji named Ibn Muljam fatally wounded Hadzrat Aly with a sword in the month of Ramazan of 40 A. H. or 660 A. D., while he was entering a mosque and in a short time he

succumbed to his injuries. His death spelled the death of early Arab democracy and the Arabs became subject to the despotism of Muaviya. Advanced political institutions cannot last long, if unsuitable to the genius and character of the nation. The surest way of attaining political freedom is the formation of a good character at home and in the school.

S. A. SALIK.

[1] HADZRAT MOHAMMED

THE APOSTLE OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

To understand fully the sublime life of Hadzrat Mohammed (peace be on his soul) and to realise the importance of his teachings, an elementary knowledge of the geography and history of Arabia is essential. These subjects are therefore briefly touched upon in this chapter.

Geography of Arabia.

The south-westernmost peninsula of Asia is designated Arabia. It is about the size of India, its length being nearly 1,300 miles and its breadth from 900 to 1,500 miles. On the north of it lies the Syrian desert and on the south is the Indian Ocean. The Red Sea known to the Arabs as *Bahr Ahmar* or *Bahr Qulzum* washes its western shores; whilst the Gulf of Persia forms the eastern boundary.

The country is rocky, sandy, dry and barren. It is covered with vast deserts and reddish high table lands, with scarcely any vegetation except a few hardy acacia and tamarind trees. The rain-fall

[1] "Hadzrat" lit. means presence but the form is usually used before the names of holy or noble persons to mean "Highness" or

is scanty and there is not a single navigable river throughout the length and breadth of the land, though one comes across a few rivulets here and there which soon lose their existence in the sun-burnt sandy soil. Sometimes a subterraneous current of water runs at a little depth below the beds of these water-courses, and at places gushes out into springs, making the surrounding land green with vegetation. In fact wherever water is found the soil is exceedingly fertile.

Physical characteristics.

Arabia is divided into various provinces. Along the western coast a chain of mountains runs almost parallel to the Red Sea. The northern and higher portion of the narrow but long strip of country between the sea and the main range of hills is called the Hijaz or the Barrier because it separates Yemen from Syria. The southern or lower portion is called Tihama. Hijaz is not a flat country as one may suppose. It is intersected by low hills and valleys. The country is barren and rocky with green plantations here and there along the periodical rain torrents. Vegetable life is scarce and in the sterile valleys, herds of cattle eke out a bare subsistence.

Hijaz.

In Hijaz are situated the holy cities of Mecca and Medina at a distance of about 270 miles from each other. Mecca is located in a sandy valley about

Mecca.

two miles long and one mile broad, at the foot of three barren hills, which rise from 200 to 500 feet high. There is hardly any garden or corn-field in the city as the soil does not respond to the labours of the husbandman. The number of trees can almost be counted on the fingers. Grapes and other fruits are imported from Tayif, which is at a distance of about seventy miles to the south-east. Water is scarce and not palatable, even the water of the sacred well Zamzam being brackish. At the present day the city gets its supply of water by means of a conduit from the fresh springs of Mount Arafat, about twelve miles away. Whenever a heavy shower of rain falls on Mount Arafat, the valley of Mecca is swept by violent torrents of water. Jiddah is the present port of the holy city. Near this coastal town is a tomb said to be that of Eve, the Jiddah or the grand-mother of the human race, from which circumstance, the port has derived its name.

Medina.

Medina, which is a shortened form of Madinatun-Nabi or the city of the prophet is the name of the old city of Yathreb. As a traveller approaches the city from the road coming from Mecca, a grand sight bursts upon his vision. The high table-land of Najd extends as far to the south as the eye can reach; a series of low hills bounds the horizon on the east; the hill of Ohod intercepts the view on the north three or four miles away;

the hill of Jebel-Ayr stands at a similar distance to the south-east; and in front lie extensive green fields and groves of graceful date trees. The city is set about the centre of this plain.

Yemen.

The south-west corner of the peninsula is known as Yemen, a hilly but fertile country, where the streams run down from the hills to the sea, making the surrounding lands fertile. Rich corn fields and coffee plantations abound in the wide valleys of the province, which is justly called the garden of Arabia. The climate of the land is temperate. Sanaa and Mareb or Saba are the principal towns of Yemen. The latter was founded by Abd Shams Saba (a grandson of Yareb), who constructed a large lake-embankment (Sadd Mareb) the remains of which are still visible in the vicinity of the city.

Hadramaut, Mahra and other provinces.

To the north of Yemen is Najran which bears the same physical characteristics. To the south are Hadramaut and Mahra. The south-eastern portion of the peninsula is called Oman and belongs to the Sultan of Muscat. On the Persian Gulf lies the province of Al-Bahrein or Al-Ahsa which is also known as Hijr after the name of its principal district. To the east of Hijaz is Tayif, which is a highly fertile country, where grapes, figs, apples, peaches, and pomegranates grow in abundance.

The high tableland extending from Hijaz on the west to near Al-Bahrein is called Najd. It consists mostly of deserts and mountain gorges, dotted with a few green plantations here and there. An independent sovereign rules this country. A desert separates Najd from Hijr and the great desert of Dahana intervenes between the former country and Hadramaut and Mahra. To the north-east of Najd are the deserts of Irak and to the north stretches the Syrian desert.

Plants and animals of Arabia.

The dates of Medina, the coffee of Yemen and the grapes of Tayif are famous. The horse of Arabia has gained a world-wide reputation. So conscious is the Arab of the worth of his animal, that he takes particular care not to allow any stallion to leave the country. The hardy camel is also an invaluable animal to him. It serves him as a ship in the desert and supplies him with milk and food. The ass, the sheep and the goat are the other principal domestic animals, which form the Arab's chief wealth.

The Bani-Aad.

Arabia was peopled at different times by different races. The descendants of Sam quarrelling with the children of Ham left Babylon and spread themselves in Arabia. The Bani-Aad were the most important among them. They peopled a district in southern Arabia contiguous to Oman, Hadramaut and Yemen where they built palaces, erected temples, worshipped

the stars and attained a considerable degree of civilisation. Among them flourished the famous king Shaddad, who is said to have built near Aden, a palace (known as the Garden of Irem) of silver and gold bricks inlaid with precious stones. His conquests extended to Syria, Irak and the borders of India. The prophet Hud appeared among them for their guidance. Some branches of the tribe refused to give up the worship of material things and to believe in the one Almighty God, in spite of the teachings of their prophet. For this disobedience the wrath of God came down upon them. A drought of unusual severity and a violent storm nearly annihilated the Aadites. The remnant which survived established themselves in Yemen.

The Thamudites.

The Thamudites, descendants of Thamud, a great-grandson of Sam, lived in Wadiul-Qora and Hijr between Syria and the Hijaz. They were famous for their longevity and enormous bulk. They built spacious buildings in mountain caves and attained considerable power. Hadzrat Salih obtained a divine commission to invite the tribe to the worship of one God, but they turned a deaf ear to his preachings. A visitation of God befell them and they were exterminated either by a virulent malady or a loud shout. References are to be found in the holy Qoran to the calamity which overtook the

The Amaliqites, like the Thamudites were descendants of Sam and were like them stalwart people. They lived in Oman, Bahrein, the Hijaz, Syria and Egypt. The branch that lived in the sacred territory round about Mecca was expelled by the Bani Jurhum, a branch of the Bani Qahtan.

The above tribes are classified by the Arabs as the Arab Aariba, that is the ancient Arabs who were founders of the Arabic language. The Arab Aariba are also called the Arab Badya or the Extinct Arabs. They were destroyed by, or intermingled with, the descendants of Qahtan or Yaqtan, who were also of Semitic origin This people came probably from Mesopotamia and settled themselves mainly in Yemen and parts of Hadzramaut. The Bani Qahtan are classified by the Arabs among the Arab Mustariba or the Naturalised Arabs, who settled in Arabia after the Arab Aariba.[1] They lived in Yemen and various other parts of Arabia, and built many cities. Yareb, a son of Qahtan, gave his name to the whole Peninsula. His grandson Abd Shams was surnamed Saba or the Capturer, on account of his numerous victories. Himyar and Kahlan, two sons of Abd Shams, became the progenitors of numerous Arab tribes as will appear from the table given in the appendix which will be useful for a study of the history of the country.

[1] For several centuries the accounts of the ancient Arabs are more or less traditional and much reliance cannot be placed on their accuracy.

In fact all the tribes of Arabia trace their origin to these two brothers and to Ishmael who had settled in Mecca among the Bani Amaliqa and the Bani Jurhum. The children of Kahlan wandered over the country and adopted the occupations of the Bedouins. The descendants of Himyar lived chiefly in towns and acquired civilised manners and the customs of an urban life. A long line of Himyar kings, with few interruptions, ruled in Yemen. About the beginning of the second century of the Christian era, the caravan trade between India and the Roman empire, which passed through Yemen was supplanted by a direct maritime trade. This change pressed heavily upon the tribes of Yemen. In consequence of the distress the Azdites, a numerous tribe descended from the stock of Kahlan, rebelled against the Himyarite king and made themselves master of Mareb. Ere long their leader Omran died. His brother Mozayqia fearing a breach of the embankment of the lake near the city, left Yemen with his tribe about the year 120 A. D The Himyarite king thus regained his kingdom. Some of the Himyarite kings ruled over Najd and the Hijaz. About the middle of the fifth century, a Himyarite king appointed his uterine brother, Hijr Akil-al-Marar of the Kinda tribe, the viceroy of the two provinces of Najd and the Hijaz. Zu Nawas the last of

the Himyarite kings, was a bigoted votary of Judaism. He spread that religion in Yemen and massacred those Christians of Najran, an adjoining province, who refused to profess the faith. One of these persecuted Christians had escaped to Constantinople and by his tale of oppression induced the Roman Emperor to request the Najashy or prince of Abyssinia to attack Yemen. Consequently a large army soon landed in the country and defeated Zu Nawas, who in order to escape the indignities of a defeat committed suicide by plunging himself into the sea. This conquest of Yemen took place in 523 A. D. Aryat, the Commander of the Abyssinian force, began to rule Yemen as a Viceroy. Abraha, another Abyssinian chief, rebelled against Aryat, put him to the sword and ascended his viceregal throne. He built a magnificent Cathedral at Sanaa and desired the Arab tribes to transfer their worship to the new shrine. The Meccans were displeased with Abraha for the attempted innovation and killed one of his agents. The temple itself was defiled by a Kareishite Enraged at such a contemptuous opposition, he started with a formidable force and several elephants to destroy the holy Kaaba. At the approach of the army, the Meccans left the city and took shelter in the mountains. Suddenly a flight of birds with small stones in their beaks appeared in the sky and threw the

stones on the army spreading death and devastation. At the same time an extraordinary flood caused havoc among the invaders. The remnant of the army retreated, and dispersed. Abraha himself met with a painful death. This invasion which took place in the year 570 A. D. has been mentioned in the Koran and is known as that of the Elephant on account of the presence of these huge unfamiliar animals. The year also came to be known by that epithet.[1] The Abyssinian rule proved so tyrannical and unbearable that Saif, a scion of the Himyarite royal family, sought the help of the Persian Emperor to expel the foreigners but without success. His son Maady Karb was more fortunate. He got the desired help and came back with an army composed of Persian convicts and established himself in Yemen, as a vassal of the Persian Emperor.

History of Mecca.

The traditional story of the foundation of Mecca is as pathetic as it is interesting. As the venerable seer Ibrahim or Abraham had no children by his first wife Sara, he married Hajira or Hagar with the consent of Sara. The second wife gave birth to Ishmael. A heavenly message foretelling the birth of twelve powerful chiefs from the loins of Ishmael excited

[1] The story in the text is explained by some writers as a poetic description of an outbreak of smallpox among the army.

the jealousy of Sara. She persistently requested Abraham to banish Hagar and her infant child to a place devoid of vegetable and animal lives. Abraham was now upon the horns of a dilemma. His vow to Sara would not allow him to disoblige her, but the fulfilment of her wishes meant the death of two dear and innocent lives. While brooding over this painful subject, he received a divine command to comply with the request. Having unlimited confidence in the justice and wisdom of the Almighty Father, Abraham took Hagar and the infant Ishmael to the site of Mecca, which was then a barren and waterless place, with no trace of life in any form. Here with a heavy heart, he left them to their fate. Keeping the child on the ground Hagar in vain ran seven times, from the hill of Safa to that of Marwa, in quest of water. As she was to commence the eighth trip, her attention was drawn to the cries of the child, who in the agony of thirst was kicking the ground. Lo! water gushed out of the place forming a fountain which came to be known as the sacred well of Zamzam. Attracted by the fountain a band of Amaliqaites settled there. When Ishmael grew up, he married a girl of the tribe but soon divorced her at the request of his father Abraham to whom she proved discourteous. About this time the Bani Jurhum and the Bani Qatura, two Yemen tribes, arrived in Mecca,

expelled the Amaliqaites and settled there. Ishmael married a daughter of the Jurhum chief.

Later on Abraham once visited Mecca and with the help of his son Ishmael built the sacred temple of Kaaba with his holy hands. To mark the corner of foundation he requested Ishmael to bring a good stone. Ishmael brought one of which the angel Gabriel gave him information. It is the sacred Hajar Aswad or the Black Stone which is said to have descended from Heaven.[1] Even at the present day, it is kissed by thousands of Moslem pilgrims, in token of veneration. On the completion of the mosque Abraham commanded the performance of seven circuits round the holy temple and the pilgrimage to mount Arafat, where Adam had met Eve. On account of their changed appearance they could not recognize each other till Gabriel came to their help. Hence the place is called Arafat or Recognition. The rite of sacrifice also owes its origin to this period. In a dream Abraham had received a divine command to sacrifice his son Ishmael. Both the father and the son stood the test with credit to themselves. Being convinced of the will of the Almighty Father, Abraham decided to carry out the command. Ishmael on his part was ready with alacrity to sacrifice his life. While the father and the son were proceeding to the hill at Mina for the performance of the

[1] Scientists consider the stone to be an aerolite.

solemn duty, Satan approached them separately to dissuade them from their firm resolve, but to no purpose. Abraham passed a sharp knife over the throat of the son but an angel turned the knife upside down and a heavenly message forbade the act. The will was taken for the deed, and Abraham was desired to sacrifice in lieu of his son a goat nurtured in heaven. Presently a well-fed goat which was seen descending the hills was sacrificed. In commemoration of this grand spirit of self-sacrifice the sacred rite of the sacrifice at Mina was consecrated by the prophet of Islam. Even now thousands of pilgrims annually perform the rite at Mina and throw stones at Satan who vainly tried to dissuade Abraham and his son from the path of duty.[1]

After Ishmael and his son the management of the temple passed to the Jurhum chief who received the imposts of the northern or upper part of Mecca A Qatura chief ruled in southern Mecca, but the Bani Qatura were subsequently driven out by the Bani Jurhum and the descendants of Ishmael. Though the Ishmaelites did not wield the sovereign authority, they shared in the general prosperity of Mecca.

The Ishmaelites.

On account of the temple of Kaaba, Mecca became the holiest place in Arabia. Annually all the tribes

[1] Some traditionists say that the stones were thrown at the goat whenever it took a wrong turn.

of the Peninsula used to flock to this city to kiss the sacred Black Stone and to make "Tawaf" or seven circuits of the holy temple as directed by Abraham. Situated on the trade route from Yemen to Syria, Mecca also became a seat of commerce and wealth. It established trade connections with Persia and through it the merchandise of India found their way to the west. Thus the Ishmaelites prospered for a considerable time and spread over the Hijaz, Najd, Yemen and Iraq but they met with some reverses when Nebuchadnezzar, a Babylonian king, subjugated the Hijaz.

In the first century before Christ, Adnan, a descendant of Ishmael, married a daughter of a Jurhumite chief and established himself in Mecca. He was the progenitor of the existing Meccan tribes which spread throughout the length and breadth of Arabia. The table given in the Appendix shows the principal tribes and families descended from him.

Fihr, surnamed Koreish or the Merchant, a descendant of Maad son of Adnan became the founder of the illustrious Koreish tribe.

Qosayy.

About the middle of the 5th century after Christ, Qosayy a descendant of Fihr married a daughter of Holayl the last Khuzaaite king and on his death became the real ruler of Mecca. He built a hall near the Kaaba. It was the

"Darun-Nadwa" or "the Council Hall" of the Nation. Here the affairs of the state were discussed and decided under the presidency of Qosayy. All descendants of Qosayy and all citizens of the age of 40 and over took part in the discussion. He called in the Koreish tribes living in the surrounding valleys and hills, and assigned to them quarters in the city which was laid out anew, its limits being extended by cutting down brushwood. Qosayy exercised the functions of the (1) "Liwa" or the standard, that is the right of affixing the war banner to the staff and making it over to the standard bearer, the (2) "Rifadah" or administration of the poor tax for feeding the poor pilgrims, the (3) "Nadwa" or presidency of the Council meetings, the (4) "Sakaya" or the exclusive privilege of supplying water to the pilgrims, the (5) "Hijaba" or the custody of the keys of the Kaaba and (6) the "Kiyada" or the command of the troops in war.

Abd-ud-Dar and Hashim.

In pursuance of the last will of Qosayy his eldest son Abd-ud-Dar succeeded him in his offices. Abd-ud-Dar, a man of weak character could retain only nominal supremacy but the real powers were exercised by his brother Abd-Munaf. On Abd-ud-Dar's death, his sons inherited his powers but they all died within a short period. As the grandsons of Abd-ud-Dar

were too young to protect their rights the sons of Abd-Munaf who weie rich and influential, conspired to wrest those rights from them. A struggle between the two families became inevitable. The partisans of each family vowed to carry on a bloody struggle for those rights, but fortunately a compromise was effected in the end. The heirs of Abd-ud-Dar retained the custody of the Kaaba and the Council Hall and the right of affixing the war banner to the staff. Hashim, a son of Abd-Munaf and the illustrious great-grandfather of Hadzrat Mohammed, secured the rights of Rifadah and Sakaya or the exclusive privilege of the administration of the poor tax and of the supply of food and water to the pilgrims. Abd-Shams, another son of Abd-Munaf obtained the privilege of commanding troops in war.

Hashim.

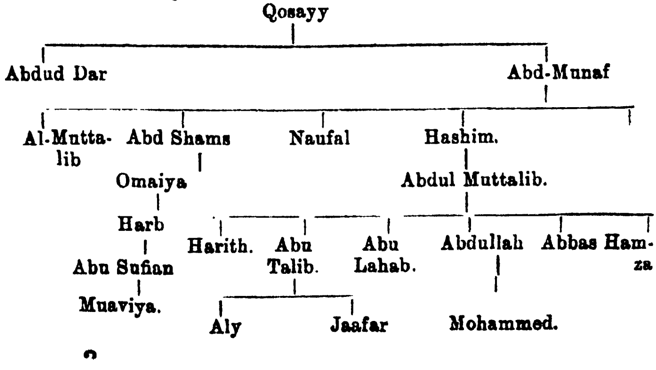
Hashim was a man of immense wealth which he spent with unstinted liberality in feeding the pilgrims. In a hot and moistureless country like Mecca and its environs, water is a precious commodity. Hashim used to collect it from the wells in Mecca and store it in cisterns by the Kaaba and in temporary leather reservoirs in the stations on the way to Arafat. He exhorted the Meccans to follow his example and every man contributed according to his mite. A fixed cess was also levied for the purpose. In a year of

famine, he imported a large quantity of food stuff from Syria and distributed it gratis among the distressed citizens of Mecca to their great relief. The munificent liberality of Hashim spread his fame far and wide. His beneficent influence was felt in other directions. He concluded a treaty with the Roman authorities and a Ghassanide prince to carry on trade in Syria with security. He also gained the friendship of the tribes residing on the trade route by promising to carry their goods without any charge. His brother obtained the permission of the Najashy of Abyssinia and the kings of Persia and Yemen for commercial operations in those countries. Every year in the winter a caravan set out for Yemen and Abyssinia and in summer another visited the marts of Syria.

Commencement of ill-feeling between the Hashimites and the Omaiyides.

The fame and glory of Hashim excited the envy of his nephew Omaiya, son of Abd Shams.[1] Omaiya, a man of opulence, began

[1] *Note.*—The following table shows the genealogy of the families of Hashim and Omaiya.



to spend his wealth in charity but this imitation of the genuine virtue of Hashim simply brought ridicule upon him. Being enraged, he challenged Hashim to submit their respective claims of superiority to an umpire. Hashim would not accept such a challenge from one who was much his junior, but the social etiquette of the time gave him no option. It was stipulated that the vanquished party should lose 50 camels and remain in exile for 10 years. The elected umpire declared against the pretensions of Omaiya who had to pay the penalty and to reside for ten years in exile in Syria. This was the beginning of the ill-feeling between the Omaiyides and the Hashimites.

On one occasion Hashim visited Medina in the course of his business as a merchant. There he beheld a beautiful lady directing her men to make purchases. On enquiry he learnt that the lady was a widow of high social status who would not marry any person unless she was allowed to become mistress of her own affairs and to exercise the right of divorce at her own discretion. Hashim solicited her hands and easily gained them on account of his fame and noble birth. This lady was Salma of the Bani Najjar tribe, a branch of the Bani Khazraj. In due course she bore a son to Hashim. This child was named "Sheb-al-Hamd" on account of white hair on his head.

Al-Muttalib and Abd-ul-Muttalib

While on a mercantile expedition to Gaza, Hashim sickened and breathed his last. His elder brother Al-Muttalib succeeded him in his offices. Al-Muttalib's magnificent entertainment of the pilgrims earned for him the epithet of "Al-Faidz" or the "Munificent." Hearing glowing accounts of the son of Hashim, who resided with his mother Salma in Medina, Al-Muttalib brought him to Mecca. When the citizens of Mecca saw a boy mounted on the camel of Al-Muttalib, they took him for a slave and called him Abd-ul-Muttalib or the slave of Muttalib. The epithet stuck to the boy, who came to be known in history as Abd-ul-Muttalib. Al-Muttalib in due course desired to restore the boy to his patrimony, but Naufal, an uncle stood in the way. Abd-ul-Muttalib sought the aid of the relatives of his mother. Forthwith 80 armed men of the Bani Najjar came to Mecca and threatened to kill Naufal, if he dared to deny Abd-ul-Muttalib his lawful inheritance. Naufal was thus obliged to surrender the properties of Hashim. A few years later, Al-Muttalib died in Yemen, while he was there with a caravan. The honourable duty of entertaining the pilgrims fell upon Abd-ul-Muttalib, who possessed neither sufficient men nor money for the purpose. In his difficulty he tried with the help of his only son Harith to explore the sacred well of Zamzam

of which no trace existed at the period. Suddenly they came upon its circle of venerable masonry and found the two gold gazelles and the swords and suits of armour which a Jurhumite *king had buried there three centuries ago. A plentiful flow of fresh water came up as in the days* of yore. The Koreish claimed the well and the things found therein as their common property. The dispute was referred to the decision of the arrows of Habal, an idol of Mecca. Lots were drawn with six arrows, two of which were yellow and represented the Kaaba. Two of them were black and stood for Abd-ul-Muttalib and the remaining two were white, which symbolised the Koreish. The gazelles fell to the share of the Kaaba and the swords and suits of armour to that of Abd-ul-Muttalib. The arrows of the Koreish being blank, they gave up their pretensions to the well. Henceforth the fame and influence of Abd-ul-Muttalib began to increase. The birth of Abdullah, the tenth son, placed Abdul Muttalib in an uncomfortable situation. It became his duty to sacrifice the child in fulfilment of a vow to devote the tenth son to the Deity, if he were ever blessed with so many. His daughters wept and clung round him. They persuaded him to cast lot between Abdullah and ten camels, the then customary fine for the blood of a man. The lot fell upon Abdullah. Again a lot was drawn between 20 camels and Abdullah

but with no better result. At last the lot fell on the camels when hundred animals were substituted for the blood of the child, who in after years became the father of the holy prophet of Arabia. The camels provided a grand feast to the citizens of Mecca ; even the wild birds and beasts partook of the surplus but the family of Abd-ul-Muttalib did not touch it. Like his father Hashim, Abd-ul-Muttalib soon became the object of envy of the Omaiyides. Harb, a son of Omaiya, sought to establish his superiority but once more the decision of the umpire was against the Omaiyides. Irritated and mortified Harb shunned the company of Abdul Muttalib, who strengthened his position by a defensive alliance with the Khuzaaites, who inhabited the quarter adjacent to that of the Koreish. This alliance proved of immense value in the early struggles of Islam. The memorable invasion of Abraha, mentioned before in connection with the history of Yemen, took place about 8 years before the death of Abd-ul-Muttalib. Encamping with his army at Mughammis, a station between Tayif and Mecca, Abraha sent a body of troops to raid Tihama. The raiders returned with a considerable booty including two hundred camels of Abdul Muttalib, who with some other Meccan chiefs, visited Abraha in his camp, offered him a third of the produce of Tihama and requested him to abstain from his intentions

against the Kaaba. Abraha rejected the offer but volunteered to return the camels of Abdul Muttalib and respect the life and property of the citizens provided he was allowed to destroy the Kaaba. On no account could the Meccans be a consenting party to such a sacrilegious act. Since a successful resistance to the host of Abraha was utterly hopeless, the Meccans headed by Abd-ul-Muttalib decided to withdraw to the neighbouring mountains. At the time of his departure, Abd-ul-Muttalib, catching hold of the link of the door of the Kaaba prayed to the Almighty God to protect His house. It is said that the earnest and sincere appeal had the desired effect. The army of Abraha was miraculously destroyed and the Kaaba was saved. This miraculous event enhanced the reputation of the Koreish and increased the reverence for the Kaaba. The year of the invasion, called the year of the Elephant, witnessed the birth of Hadzrat Mohammed.

History of the King- of Hira.

It has been noticed before that about the year 120 A. D., the Azdites, a numerically strong tribe, emigrated from Yemen. Some of them moved towards Oman; while others proceeded northward to Syria through Najran and the Hijaz, leaving many offshoots on the way, who settled both in Mecca and Medina. The Qodzaaite tribe descended from

Himyar lived in Mahra. Being hard pressed by the Himyarite rule and the difficulties arising out of the great commercial change, they also migrated to the neighbourhood of Mecca even before the Azdites. Meeting with opposition from the local tribes, they dispersed themselves in different directions. The Bani Aslam settled in the valley of Wadi-ul-Qora to the north of Medina, the Bani Kalb in Dumat-al Jandal, the Bani Saleh in the region to the east of Palestine and the Bani Yazid in Mesopotamia.

From each of these sources certain bands of Azdites, Qodzaaites and Meccan Arabs wandered towards Bahrein and thence to the bank of the Euphrates where about the year 200 A.D., they laid the foundations of the city of Hira near the modern town of Kufa. They also took possession of Ambar not far from Hira. Spurning the claims of Persian suzerainty, the Qodzaaite chief with his followers moved on towards Syria; thus Jozayma, the Azdite chief, remained in sole possession of Hira as a vassal of the Persian Emperor. Jozayma made frequent inroads into Arabia and warred with the Syrian Arabs, who were the allies of Rome. As Persia claimed the allegiance of Hira and of the eastern Arabs, Rome counted the Syrian Arabs as their allies. In the struggle for Empires between the mighty monarchs, the two divisions

of the Arabs fought on the sides of their respective suzerains. Jozayma's daughter[1] married Adi son of Rabiah, the Lakhamite king of Yemen and gave birth to Amr, who was adopted by Jozayma. Amr, whose reign extended from 268 to 288 A.D., defeated the famous queen Zenobia or Zebba and annexed Mesopotamia. Amr was succeeded by his son Amr-ul-Qays I. During his reign (288 338 A. D.) the Persian Emperor Sapor II sent a punitive expedition into Arabia for the ravages committed by the Arabs within the boundary of the empire. The brunt of the punitive force fell upon the Bani Iyad, Bani Bakr and other Meccan families. To guard against future Arab inroads, Sapor caused a deep trench to be dug from the Persian Gulf along the frontier of *Iraq*. Traces of the trench known as the Trench of Sapor were found even during the time of the Moslem conquest. In the reign of Numan I (390 to 418 A. D.) who built for himself the famous palace of Khawarnaq, Christianity made progress in Hira and Mesopotamia. In the beginning of the 6th century, Harith a Kinda chief with the Bani Bakr and other central tribes of Arabia defeated the army of Hira, plundered the neighbouring country and captured Hira itself, but after a short stay, he abandoned the city and retired to Arabia. Amr-ul-Qays III (502 to 513 A. D.) now succeeded to the government

[1] Ibn Khuldun says that Adi married Jozayma's sister.

of Hira. This monarch in an inroad into Arabia brought a woman of unsurpassed beauty surnamed Ma-ul-Sama or "Water of the Heavens." This act caused hostilities between him and the central tribes of Arabia but the matter was peacefully settled by the marriage of a son of Amr-ul-Qays with Hind, daughter of Harith, the marauding chief. In 605 A. D., Hira was made a Persian province and Numan V, the last of the Lakhamite dynasty, was imprisoned as he refused to send some of his female relatives to adorn the harem of the Persian Emperor. When Islam raised its head, Hira was a Persian satrapy.

History of the Ghassanide kingdom.

The Azdites in their northward march settled for a long time in the valley of Batn Marr close to Mecca, but in the beginning of the third century, finding the country too small for themselves, they pursued their northern journey and reached the plains of Bostra and the country of Bilqaa. About this time they acquired the name of Ghassan for their long residence by a fountain of that name. The Bani Saleh, who lived in the adjoining country with the permission of the Roman authorities, demanded a tribute from the Bani Ghassan, which they reluctantly consented to pay. Towards the close of the third century a tax-gatherer of the Bani Saleh was killed in an altercation with a

Gassanide chief; hence a deadly struggle took place between the two tribes, in which the Gassanides became victorious. Their chief Thalaba, son of Amr, was recognised by the Romans as the king of the Gassanides. The Gassanide kings generally sided with the Romans in their wars with the Persians. Harith I, a Gassanide King, who ruled from 530 to 572 A. D. entered into a war with the Kings of Hira. Harith VII was the Chief Ruler of the Gassanides from 600 to 630 A. D. Jabia and Amman (Philadelphia) were his seats of Government. About this time Ayham, son of Jabala, ruled at Palmyra or Tadmor and Shorahbil at Muab and Muta. Both these rulers were probably subordinate to Harith VII. To this latter king, the holy Apostle sent a letter in 622 A.D. inviting him to the fold of Islam.

The Central tribes of Arabia.

The Bani Madhij, the Bani Bakr, the Bani Tughlib and the Bani Kinda.

About the middle of the fourth century, two great parties, the Maadite tribes of Abrahamic origin and the Madhij tribe descended from Kahlan, were arrayed against each other. The Bani Madhij made an incursion upon Tihama, but being repulsed settled in Najran. About the year 460 A.D. Hojar Akil-ul-Morar, a Kinda chief, became the ruler of his own tribes as well as of the Maadites. The most distinguished among the Maadite tribes were the Bani Bakr and the Bani

Tughlib who with their offshoots lived in Tihama, Yamama, Najd and Bahrein. After Hojar's death the Bani Bakr and the Bani Tughlib refused to recognize the leadership of a Kinda chief and elected Kolayb of the Bani Tughlib tribe to be their ruler. Kolayb, a haughty and overbearing man, wantonly killed the milch camel of Basus, a woman of the Bani Bakr tribe. This iniquitous deed set the Bani Bakr against the Bani Tughlib. A deadly struggle, which under the name of the War of Basus, lasted for forty years, thinned the ranks of both the tribes. At last the Bani Bakr being defeated by the Bani Tughlib sought the protection of the king of Hira. They remained steadfast in their loyalty to Hira, but on the downfall of the Lakhamite dynasty they defeated the Persians in the battle of Dzubar and maintained their independence. The Bani Bakr with their branch the Bani Hanifa who embraced Christianity continued to live about Yamama and the shores of the Persian Gulf. The Bani Tughlib also attached themselves to Hira but they migrated to Mesopotamia and thence to Syria in order to escape from the vengeance of the successor of Amr III, a King of Hira, who was murdered by a poet of the Bani Tughlib tribe. About the time of the advent of the holy prophet they were again living in Mesopotamia professing Christianity. In 632 A.D. they attached

themselves to the false prophetess Sajah. Chieftainship of the Bani Kinda of the stock of Kahlan devolved upon a junior branch which dwelt in Hadzramaut. Al-Ashath, a son of the Kinda chief with his whole clan embraced Islam in 631 A.D.

The Bani Ghatafan and the Bani Khasafa with their branches the Bani Abs, the Bani Zibyan, etc.

The Bani Ghatafan and the Bani Khasafa, two important tribes of the Meccan or Abrahamic stock deserve mention. The Bani Zibyan and the Bani Abs were branches of the Bani Ghatafan and the Bani Salim living near Mecca and the Bani Hawazin were branches of the Bani Khasafa. The Bani Hawazin were again subdivided into the Bani Thaqif who inhabited Taif and the Bani Amr bin Saasaa. Except the Bani Thaqif all the other tribes were nomadic in their habits and roamed with their flocks of cattle over the tableland of Najd from Khaybar and Wadi-ul-Qora to the latitude of Mecca. From about the middle of the 6th century to the beginning of the 7th century of the Christian era (*i. e.*, 568 to 609 A.D.) the tribes of Ghatafan and Khasafa were engaged in a disastrous war known as the War of Dahis, which wasted both the tribes. Qays the chief of the Abs tribe plundered a horse of unrivalled speed called Dahis. Huzayfa, the chief of the Bani Zibyan boasted that his horse Ghabra was swifter than Dahis. A match

aud a wager were arranged. The Bani Zibyan by an ignoble stratagem checked the speed of Dahis and Ghabra won the race. The dispute over this affair was the cause of the war of Dahis. The Bani Abs defeated the Bani Zibyan and mercilessly slaughtered Huzayfa and many other chiefs. Their cruelties excited the sympathy of the other Ghatafan clans who combined together to crush the Bani Abs. Being alarmed at this coalition, the Bani Abs formed an alliance with the Bani Amr, whilst the Bani Tamim of Meccan stock who inhabited the northern desert of Najd from the confines of Syria to Yamama ranged themselves on the side of the Bani Zibyan on account of their enmity with the Bani Amr. Being conscious of their numerical inferiority, the Bani Amr and the Bani Abs took up their position behind a steep and narrow gorge of mount Jabala and awaited the attack of their enemy. As soon as the Bani Tamim and the Bani Zibyan came up, the Bani Abs and their allies made a furious attack routing the enemy who were vastly superior in number. This battle of Sheb Jabala was fought in 579 A.D. At last in 609 A.D. a peace was concluded, but again the ancient feud between the Bani Ghatafan and the Bani Khasafa was rekindled and was not extinguished till the common bond of Islam established peace and friendship.

The Bani Tamim.

After the battle of Sheb-Jabala, the Bani Tamim fell out with the Bani Bakr, who in a year of famine trespassed on their pasture lands. The struggle lasted for several years. At last it subsided only when both the tribes entered into the common brotherly fold of Islam.

The Bani Tay.

The Bani Tay, emigrating from Yemen settled by the mountains of Aja and Salma and the town of Tayma. Some of them were votaries of Judaism and others of Christianity. Its two branches, the Bani Ghauth and the Bani Jadilla were arrayed against each other on account of the disputed restitution of a camel. After a feud of 25 years, peace was restored. The famous chieftains Hatim Tay and Zaid Khayl were of the Bani Ghauth tribe. The latter professed Islam and his name was changed into Zaidal Khayr or Zaid the Beneficent.

History of Yathreb or Medina.

Being hard pressed by foreign invasions, the Jews dispersed and a large number of them entered into Arabia. The Bani Nadzir, the Qorayza and the Qaynuqaa appeared before Yathreb. Finding the Qodzaa and other Bedouin tribes too weak to offer any resistance, they settled there and built for themselves spacious and fortified houses.

About the year 300 A. D., the Aus and the Khazraj tribes settled in Yathreb and began to share the territory with the Jews. At first the Azdite clans of Aus and Khazraj were weak but in course of time they gained in strength and began to encroach upon the fields and plantations of the Jews. This high-handed act of the new-comers led to a struggle between the parties. Malik bin Ajlan, the Khazrajite chief, procured the help of the Bani Ghassan and massacred many Jewish chiefs. Thus about the close of the fifth century the Bani Aus and the Bani Khazraj became masters of Yathreb and ousted the Jews from whatever land they chose. Shortly after these events they were suddenly attacked by a prince called Abu Kharib, who destroyed their date plantations. As Abu Kharib could not press his attack home on account of his illness, he had to make peace and depart. In the beginning of the 6th century the Khazraj and the Aus fell out on account of disputes about the relative dignity of Malik and Ohaiha (the Ausite chief) and the amount of blood-fine to be paid for the murder of an adherent of the former. Battles were fought and the bloody feud lasted for about thirty years. Wearied with the devastating war they elected Hassan, the Khazrajite poet as an umpire. This patriotic bard settled the dispute by deciding in favour of the Aus, and to prevent further bloodshed himself paid the

disputed portion of the fine. Hostilities again broke out on account of the murder of a Khazrajite or one of the dependants of the tribe. The Bani Khazraj defeated their opponents and expelled from the city an Ausite tribe. The Bani Aus with the help of the Jews and a few other tribes defeated the Khazraj and their allies with great slaughter and refrained from the carnage only when the latter craved for mercy. The Bani Khazraj were now humbled and weakened but not reconciled. They nursed animosities in their breast. Assassinations took place at times though no open hostilities broke out. Wearied with the dissension, both parties were about to elect Abdullah ibn Ubby, the most distinguished person of the Bani Khazraj as their chief or king but the arrival of the Prophet to the city gave a different turn to the state of affairs.

Social and material condition of the Arabs.

Broadly speaking, there were two classes of Arabs, *viz.*, Ahl-Hadr or dwellers of towns and villages and Ahl Badu or the Bedouins, the nomads of the desert. These latter lived in tents and in search of pasturage wandered over the desert with their flocks of cattle which formed their chief wealth. The residents of cities busied themselves in commerce, agriculture, horticulture and cattle-breeding. They were the carriers of the merchandise of Persia and India to Syria, whence the commodities found their way to Europe.

Their horses, as already observed, gained a world-wide reputation and their asses and camels were excellent. Their sandy, rocky and moistureless country did not present suitable conditions for agriculture, but wherever the conditions were favourable, agriculture and horticulture were not neglected. It has already been noticed before, that the coffee of Yemen, the grapes of Tayif and the dates of Medina acquired considerable fame.

The Arabs, whether dwellers of cities or of deserts, were proverbially hospitable, though highway robbery in a manner was their profession. As any stranger would be a welcome guest in an Arab home to "share the plenty or rather the poverty of the host," so any lonely traveller would have to part with his superfluous money on pain of death. They possessed a fiery temper and the virtue of pity was wanting in their character. Trifling causes led to bloodshed and even to long-continued war: for instance a mean stratagem employed in a race between the noble steed Dahis and another was the cause of the War of Dahis which decimated for forty years the tribes of Ghatafan and Khasafa. They were addicted to drinking and gambling while public women amused them by their dances. Poligamy was practised to an unlimited extent and female infants were sometimes burnt to death.

The fair at Okadz and the virtues of the Arab.

Every year during the sacred month of Zil-Qada when bloodshed was forbidden, all the tribes of Arabia as well as those residing beyond its frontiers used to assemble in the fair at Okadz situated between Nakhala and Tayif within three days' easy march from Mecca. Here the men congregated not only for the purpose of trade, but entered into competition for poetry, oratory, genealogical knowledge, feats of strength and warlike arts. It was in fact the Olympia of the Arabs. The best poems were sometimes written in letters of gold and were called Mudzahabat or golden but most frequently they were suspended in the holy temple of Kaaba, in token of high appreciation and were named "Muallaqat" or suspended. The Sabaa Muallaqat or the seven suspended poems still testify to the richness of the Arabic language and the wonderful eloquence of the Arab poets.

Political condition of the Arabs.

Though the Arabs lived in the same country, spoke the same language, and practically belonged to the same race, they were not an united nation. The various tribes living in different parts of the country were frequently at war with each other. Honour, friendship and ties of blood kept together the families of a tribe and regulated the relation among the different tribes. The tribal chief owed his authority more to his

superior wisdom and power of persuasion than anything else. A temporary combination of several tribes would soon raise an army against a common foe, while a more lasting union would form a petty kingdom. They were singularly free from the shackles which a fixed form of Government and an artificial society have forged for mankind. As a matter of fact freedom was the very essence of their life and having seldom been subjugated by foreign powers, they loved it passionately. The Arabs of Najd and Central Arabia were never under foreign yoke. Yemen had been ruled by the Abyssinians for about twenty years but with the help of the Persians they were turned out by an Arrab Prince named Saif. After the death of Saif, Yemen was ruled for a century by a Persian Viceroy called Marzaban. The provinces in the north and in the east were at times subjugated by the Romans and the Persians, but on the slightest opportunity, the Arabs revolted and made themselves independent. In short, they themselves would not live in peace nor would they allow any rest to the Romans and the Persians.

Religion of the Arabs.

As regards religion, a few tribes professed Judaism and a fewer tribes or families believed in Christianity. Some individuals were atheists believing neither in God nor in the future world, but the great majority of the Arabs, though

observing the Abrahamic rites of pilgrimage and sacrifice, were really idolaters and worshippers of stars and heavenly bodies. Animals such as the camel, the horse, the gazelle and inanimate things like palm trees and pieces of rock and stone were objects of their adoration. In the Kaaba were ranged 360 Gods and Goddesses with the statue of the great idol, Habal, made of red agate, in the centre. Images of Abraham, Ishmael, Mary and Christ and of some other deified persons such as Yaghus and Nasr and two gazelles of gold and silver found their place in the sacred temple. Lat, the bright moon, Manat, the dark moon, Uzza, partly bright and partly dark moon, Mercury, Jupiter and Canopus received adoration. Belief in Jins and Ghouls that is spirits was common. Human sacrifices were not unknown. In short their religion was a strange mixture of Abrahamic rites, Sabianism and idolatry, influenced by Judaism and Christianity. They ate serpents, scorpions and even dead animals. The cycle of degradation reached its lowest depth. It was now to take an upward turn. Signs of better times were visible. Noble minds gave up idolatry and began to preach to their fellow beings the pure religion of Abraham. Waraqa son of Naufal, Othman son of Harith, Zaid son of Amr and Abdulla son of Jahash were among these noble souls. Waraqa made himself acquainted with the scriptures of

the Jews and the Christians and according to Ibn Khuldun, became a Christian himself. In this period of their history, Hadzrat Mohammed appeared among the Arabs. He made them give up idolatry, taught them the existence of only one Almighty God, sowed among them the seeds of culture, and welded them into a compact conquering nation.

CHAPTER I

From Infancy to the Inspiration

The birth of the prophet in 570 A.D., and his parentage.

On the 12th of Rabi-ul Awwal in the year 570 A.D. when Anu-Shirvan was adorning the throne of Persia, Hadzrat Mohammed first saw the light of day at Mecca in the family of Abd Munaf, the noblest family in Arabia, as it traced its descent from Ishmael or Ismail. In this family were centred the rule of Mecca and the custody of the holy temple of Kaaba. The year of the prophet's birth was a memorable one, as it was the year in which Abraha, the Abyssinian viceroy of Yemen, came to attack Mecca with a large army and a number of elephants. According to the tradition, Abraha's army was destroyed by a flight of swallows which throwing small stones among the army, caused a havoc. At the same time, heavy showers of rain fell, carrying the dead and the dying to the sea. After this sad experience, Abraha returned to Yemen where he died. Hence this year is called the year of the Elephant.[1] The Almighty God in His inscrutable

[1] See the introduction for the full story.

ways deprived the infant of a father's affectionate care, as Abdullah while returning from a mercantile expedition to Gaza, sickened in the way and died at Medina, 6 months before the birth of the future prophet, leaving behind a house, five camels, a flock of goats and a slave girl named Barakah *alias* Umm Ayman. This property, though very small in itself, was sufficient for even a widow of rank in those days of simple habits. The birth of the child gave immense pleasure to the grandfather Abdul Muttalib who took the infant to the holy temple of Kaaba to express his gratitude to God. Immediately after his birth, the child was sucked for a few days by Thuiba, a slave woman of his uncle Abu Lahab. For the performance of this simple duty the foitunate woman throughout her life received regular presents of cloth and other articles from the prophet.

The child lives for five years with his nurse Halima.

Ere long Hadzrat's mother Amina, a daughter of Wahb, the chief of the clan of Zohri, entrusted, according to the practice of Arab ladies of rank, the bringing up of the child to Halima a Bedouin lady of the tribe of the Bani Saad (a branch of the Bani Hawazin) descended from Modzar, the common ancestor of the Koreish. Halima brought up the child with unusual care and kindness. When he was two years old, Halima weaned him and took him to his mother. The salubrious

climate of the desert had a wonderful effect upon the growth of the child, who looked like one of double his age. Amina was delighted to see the healthy child and again made him over to Halima. When at the age of four years, the holy child along with the children of Halima, went out to tend goats, two angels, so says the tradition, appeared on the spot, opened the stomach of the future prophet, took out his heart, removed therefrom a black spot supposed to be the cause of evil propensities in man, washed it with sacred ice and put it again in its proper place.[1] Alarmed at this incident, Halima again took the child to Mecca to restore him to his mother, but once more she persuaded the nurse to take away the child with her. At the age of about five years, the child was finally made over to the mother. As the prophet passed his infancy and early childhood among the Bani Saad, he acquired the chaste idiom of that tribe and always retained a grateful remembrance of the kindness with which he was brought up by Halima. In a year of drought when Halima visited him in Mecca, he persuaded his wife Khadija to give her a camel and forty sheep, as he had then no property

[1] European writers, who do not believe in the supernatural, think that the story has been built upon the allegorical expression, "have we not opened thy breast?" used in the 94th sura of the Qoran. They even allege that the child had a fit of epilepsy. This last statement is quite untrue as will be shown hereafter. The occurrence is called Shaq-Sadar or the splitting of the chest.

of his own. On another occasion he, as a mark of respect, spread out his own mantle on the ground for Halima to sit upon.

The child's visit to Medina with his mother, who died in the way.

The sixth year of the child passed amidst the most tender and affectionate care of his mother. Towards the end of that year, she took him to Yathreb to introduce him to the maternal relatives of his father. She stayed for a month in Medina in the house of Nabigha where her husband had died. Observant and impressionable as the child was, he retained a vivid impression of his short sojourn. Years afterwards he used to point out the tank wherein he learned to swim, the place where his father was buried and the house where he played with his cousins. On the return journey to Mecca, Hadzrat Amina fell ill and died at Alwa, about midway between the two holy cities. Henceforth Umm Ayman, though herself a mere girl, became the nurse and attendant of the child. This sad event made a deep impression on the tender and loving heart of the boy and probably engendered that pensive and meditative character for which he became distinguished in after years. The charge of the child now fell upon his grand-father Abdul Muttalib who treated him with unusual fondness. The chlid on his part showed extraordinary love for the grand-father. He would frequently quit the company of the nurse Umm Ayman and

would go to the apartment of Abdul Muttalib, whether he was awake or asleep.

Death of Abdul Muttalib and the guardianship of Abu Talib.

Two years later, when the boy was 8 or 9 years old, Abdul Muttalib passed away. This was another severe blow to the tender feeling of the boy, who followed the bier of the old man to the cemetery of Hajun with silent but burning tears. The guardianship of the boy at last shifted to his uncle Abu Talib. A strong attachment very soon grew up between the two. The boy was his constant companion. He ate by his side, slept by him and accompanied him wherever he went.

The occupation of a shepherd gave the boy ample opportunity for contemplation and acquiring knowledge of current legends.

The princely charities of Hashim and Abdul Muttalib had made the family poor. On account of his poverty Abu Talib was unable to keep in his hands the office of supplying food and water to the pilgrims. He gave up the honour in favour of his richer brother Abbas, who retained only the Sakaya or the exclusive privilege of supplying water to the pilgrims, while the rifadah or the right of providing food for the pilgrims and the administration of the poor tax passed on to the family of Naufal, a brother of Hashim. The necessities of his uncle led the gifted boy, like many other Meccan lads of the time, to tend the sheep and goats of the citizens upon the

neighbouring hills and in the valleys. The occupation was congenial to his nature, as it afforded him leisure for contemplation and was hallowed by the examples of Moses and David. Truly it has been said that "the child is the father of the man." Even as a boy, Hadzrat Mohammed loved loneliness and shunned the mirthful plays of the children. While watching his flocks of cattle in the dark hours of the evening, he would contemplate upon the grand and awe-inspiring scene around him. The bright constellations, the twinkling stars, the blue sky, the stately hills, the deep silence of the desert, the swift lightnings, and the fury of the tempest, all these impressed him with the idea of an All-directing Agent. Singularly free as he was from vices, he heartily detested the pernicious habits and customs of the Arabs. His sympathetic and loving nature was deeply moved by the sight of human miseries about him. He acquainted himself with the legends of the country, which were varied and numerous, as they came from the Jews, the Christians, the Magians, the Sabæans and the various idolatrous tribes of Arabia.

His travel to Syria at the age of 12 years.

At the early age of twelve years he had the advantage of travelling in foreign country. His uncle Abu Talib was about to start on a mercantile expedition to Syria. Naturally he did not like to take out

the boy on such a distant journey. But his passionate tears at the thought of separation from his uncle moved Abu Talib to take the boy with him. The caravan halted in many Jewish settlements, proceeded through the valley of Hijr with its deserted buildings hewn out of the rock and passed the ruinous sites of Petra Jerash, Ammon and other places in its way to Bostra. The sight of the ruins and the legends connected therewith supplied ample materials for the contemplation of his thoughtful mind and brought home to him the transitory character of earthly greatness, while his contact with the Jews and the Christians gave him some first-hand knowledge of their rites and doctrines. It is said that in this journey Bahira, a clergyman, foretold the future prophetic mission of the boy.

The Fijar or the sacrilegious war.

About this time Hadzrat Mohammed had another novel experience. At the annual fair at Okadz a spirit of rivalry grew up between the Koreish and the Bani Howazin, a numerous tribe living between Mecca and Tayif. Small incidents such as the assault upon an arrogant poet by an indignant Hawazinite and the insult offered to a Hawazinite maid by some Koreishites led to strife and bloodshed. Such was the origin of the Fijar or the sacrilegious war so called because it occurred in the sacred term and was eventually carried on into the

sacred territory. The struggles did not however lead to a general warfare on account of timely interference by the leaders. To prevent the recurrence of such events, it was decided to deposit in the fair all arms with Abdullah bin Jodaon, a Koreishite chief. But the precaution was of no avail. Birradz, a friend of the Koreish used to escort to Okadz, the rich caravan sent by the Prince of Hira. Orwa, a Hawazin warrior supplanted Birradz in this duty. For this reason Birradz plundered the caravan, richly laden with perfumes and musks, which was being escorted by Orwa and killed him. When the news of the wanton murder reached Okadz, Abdullah bin Jodaon returned to the men their arms and left for Mecca pretending some urgent business. But the real cause of his departure soon leaked out. The Bani Hawazin pursued the Koreish who soon entered into the sacred precincts of the Kaaba wherein bloodshed is forbidden. Being frustrated in their attempt at retaliation the Bani Hawazin challenged the Koreish to a battle in the coming year. The challenge was accepted, both sides made preparations and several battles were fought with varying success. In one of these battles, the Prophet took part; but being averse to bloodshed, he performed the duty of picking up the arrows discharged by the enemy and handing them over to his uncles. The hostilities lasted for nearly four years and

at last peace was restored about the year 590 A.D. on the initiation of Otba, the nephew of Harb. The dead on both sides were numbered. As the Hawazin had lost twenty men more than the Koreish, Otba agreed to pay the usual fine for these lives.

Self-education of the Prophet in the fair at Okadz.

The fair at Okadz had another interest of a very different kind for the future prophet. Here the best poets and orators of Arabia assembled to recite their productions, recounting the glories of their tribes. These recitations not only kindled the fire of patriotism and noble ambition in the enthusiastic young soul but formed perfect models of rhetoric and poetry for his fertile genius. Ardent votaries of all religions met here. The Jews, the Christians and the Heathens of Arabia had their representatives. He heard with rapt attention the preachings of Coss the bishop of Najran. In their discussions the master mind of Hadzrat Mohammed could not but discern the elements of truth common to all.

Marriage with Hadzrat Khadija.

The holy Prophet passed a quiet and contented life in the bosom of his uncle's family. He had no hankering after the worldly goods nor had any liking for a busy life but the necessities of his uncle again induced him to set out for Syria in charge of the bnsiness of Khadija,

a rich kins-woman. The caravan took the same route which he had passed thirteen years before and proceeded to Bostra. He managed the business with such prudence and economy that a large profit accrued. This transaction as well as his handsome appearance made a favourable impression on her and a pure attachment grew up between them. Ere long Abu Talib arranged a marriage between the couple though she had rejected several suitors before. At this time the prophet was of twenty-five years, while the widow Khadija reached the age of forty years. In spite of her age, she retained her charms and looked much younger than her age. The marriage proved particularly happy. During her life-time the Prophet did not marry any other wife. She lived for twenty-five years and bore him three sons, namely, Tayib, Tahir, and Qasim, all of whom died in infancy, and four daughters namely, Zaynab, Roqaya, Umm Kulthum and Fatima.[1] The alliance placed the prophet in affluent circumstances and gave him that leisure for which his heart yearned. In the second expedition to Syria which lasted for several months the prophet mixed with many Christian monks and clergymen. On account of his maturer judgment, he gained a better knowledge

[1] Besides the above children, the prophet had a son named Ibrahim by Mary, a Coptic lady who was presented to the prophet by Makowkas, the Christian Governor of Egypt. The child died in infancy.

of the rites and doctrines of the degraded forms of Christianity prevalent there.

The Hilful Fuzul.

About the time of the prophet's marriage with Khadija, the administration of Mecca was weak. Strangers coming to the city were robbed and sometimes murdered. The poet Hanzala better known as Abu Tamahan was openly robbed in a street of Mecca. To prevent such occurrences, the Prophet took a leading part in forming a league, the object of which was to protect the strangers whether free or slave and to obtain redress for the wrongs done to them. The league was named Hilf-ul-Fuzul or the Federation of the Fazals after an extinct but older league of the kind formed by Fazal, Mufazzal and Fazail.

The liberation of Zaid and rules about slavery.

He gave further proof of his kind and generous nature. His wife presented to him a slave of the name of Zaid son of Harith. He treated the slave very kindly and liberated him at once; but Zaid was so much impressed with the kind treatment meted out to him that he refused to return to his father and preferred to live with the future prophet. In after years though Hadzrat Mohammed did not consider it expedient, in view of the then conditions of society, to abolish slavery at once, he made certain wise rules with a view to its ultimate

extinction. The liberation of slaves was declared to be a highly meritorious act and was prescribed as the penalty for certain sins. Out of the public treasury sums would be advanced to the slaves to purchase their liberty. He further ruled that slaves should be fed and clothed in the same style as the masters. Slavery on such conditions means in reality partnership. Slaves occupied positions of honour and influence. Zaid, the liberated slave, commanded the army which fought against the force of the Byzantine Emperor at Muta and under him served the greatest soldiers of the day.

Dispute about the handling of the Black Stone settled by Hadzrat Mohammed.

When Hadzrat Mohammed was of thirty-five years, the Meccans were rebuilding the temple of Kaaba which had been shattered by one of those violent floods which occasionally sweep down the valley of Mecca. None dared to demolish the wall even for the purpose of reconstruction. At last Walid bin Mughira took up a pickaxe and threw down a portion of the wall. On that day further work was suspended to see if any evil befell Walid, but as nothing untoward happened, the work was taken up in right earnest on the next day. The material of a Greek ship, which foundered near Shuliba, the ancient harbour of Mecca was purchased and the services of Bacum the Greek captain were utilized in the construction of the

holy building. At the time of handling the sacred Black Stone, every family desired to place it in its position. Hence a serious dispute arose which threatened to lead to bloodshed. At last Abu Omaiya the oldest citizen and uncle of the famous Khalid the "sword of God" proposed that the first man to enter in by the gate of the Bani Sheyba should be chosen to settle the dispute. The suggestion received unanimous approval. As destiny would have it, the best man fitted for the duty was the first to enter in by the gate. It was Hadzrat Mohammed who, on account of his truthfulness and honesty had acquired the epithet of Al-Amin or the Trusty. He wisely placed the Sacred Stone on a piece of cloth and asked the Koreish to catch hold of the same and to lift the stone, so that every one might have equal honour in the matter. When the stone was raised to proper height Hadzrat Mohammed took it with his holy hand and put it in its proper place. The dispute was thus settled on account of his tact and wisdom, to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned.

The revelation of the Qoran.

His gentle, kind and pure nature was deeply moved by the sight of misery, vice, ignorance and idolatry around him. Neither Judaism nor the Jacobite Christianity prevalent in Syria with its doctrine of Trinity and the worship of Mary, as the mother of God, satisfied the earnest and sincere

seeker of truth. His master mind loved to ponder over these evils in silence, to pass his days in deep meditation and to find out a remedy, if possible. Every year he spent the month of Ramdzan in reflection and contemplation, in mount Hira, two or three miles to the north of Mecca. As the time of God's revelation to him drew nigh, solitude became a passion with him. In a cave in the mount, he passed several nights and days at a stretch in solemn and deep meditation and in communion with the soul of the Universe. "The atmosphere of calm and peace both mental and physical, furnishes by universal consent, the opportunity or condition for the highest vision that is the condition to which we hurried and time-driven mortals so seldom attain. This is the state in which inspiration comes."[1] Verily the beneficent, intelligent and conscious Nature reveals Himself to those who seek Him. One night in the fortieth year of his life, while Hadzrat Mohammed was immersed in deep meditation in Mount Hira the angel Gabriel appeared to him and said "Read." The Prophet replied, "I cannot read," whereupon Gabriel pressed him so tightly that he felt that his breath was going out of him. Then Gabriel again asked him to read. To avoid a repetition of his recent experience, the Prophet answered,

[1] Quoted from Sir Oliver Lodge's Reason and Belief.

"What shall I read"? Gabriel said "Recite (the Qoran which shall be revealed to you from time to time) in the name of Thy Lord who created (the universe and who) created man from a clot of blood. Recite (the Qoran), depend upon God because thy Lord is most beneficent, who taught knowledge by (means of) the pen (and who) taught man (by means of revelation) what he did not know." The recitation over, Gabriel disappeared and the Prophet felt as though the words were engraved in his heart. He thought he was possessed of evil spirits. Awe-stricken by his novel experience, he hastened back to his home and requested his wife Khadija to cover him with a blanket. Resting a while, he said to his wife "Khadija, I have become either a soothsayer or a madman." The loving but wise wife replied "You never told a lie nor never returned evil for evil; you always kept your words and led a virtuous life. You can never be either a soothsayer or a madman." She thought that her husband was to be the prophet of her nation and consulted her cousin Waraqa, who was well read in the scriptures of the Jews and the Christians. Waraqa confirmed her opinion. It was really the divine warrant of prophetic mission. The verse revealed on this occasion is known as the verse of Ikra which means "read" or "recite" because it commences with that word. For a period, variously stated from six months

to three years, no other revelation came. The prophet became dejected and despondent. At one time he contemplated suicide by hurling himself down a precipice. As he was roving about in search of a suitable place, Gabriel appeared again and consoled him by saying "Oh Mohammed *verily thou art the Prophet of God and I am Gabriel.*"[1]

Modes of Inspiration.

At the moment of inspiration anxiety pressed upon the Prophet and his countenance was troubled. He fell to the ground like one intoxicated or overcome by sleep and in the coldest day, his forehead would be bedewed with large drops of perspiration, even his she-camel, if Mahomet chanced to become inspired while he rode on her, would become affected by a wild excitement, sitting down and rising up, now planting her legs rigidly, then throwing about as if they would be parted from her. To

[1] Another version of the incident runs thus :—While Muhammed was at Ajyad he saw an angel in the sky calling to him "Oh Mohammed I am Gabriel." Every time he turned his eyes towards the heaven, he saw the same angel. Terrified with the vision, he hastened back to his home and related the whole story to his wife Khadija, adding that he might turn out a soothsayer, the thing which he detested most. Khadija consulted her cousin Waraqa, who said it was the beginning of prophetic office. After this incident the verse of Ikra was revealed, but for sometime no other revelation followed. Being despondent, the Prophet was attempting to commit suicide when Gabriel appeared and said "Oh Mohammed thou art the Prophet of God in truth and I am Gabriel."

outward appearance, inspiration descended unexpectedly and without any previous warning even to the Prophet. When questioned on the subject Mahomet replied " Inspiration descendeth upon me in one of two ways: sometimes Gabriel cometh and communicateth the Revelation unto me as one man unto another and that is easy. At other times it affecteth me like the ringing of bell, penetrating my very heart and rending me as it were into pieces and that it is which grievously afflicteth me."[1]

The Truth of the Inspiration.

Modern psychic researches have proved the existence of a spiritual world and the possibility of revelation in some form or other. The pure character of Hadzrat Mohammed, his honesty, his marvellous genius, his keen interest in the welfare of the human race, his yearning for communion with the soul of Nature, his deep meditations in the solitude of Mount Hira, his lofty teachings, his moral influence over his most intimate friends, who knew the ins and outs of his nature—all these facts based on unimpeachable historical evidence—leave no room to doubt the divine origin of the revelations which were delivered to him by angel Gabriel or which came to him in trances.

The belief in angels found in Islam is not unworthy of credence. Sir Oliver Lodge, one

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Life of the Prophet.

of the greatest scientists of the present day, says "The idea of angels is usually treated as fanciful. Imaginative it is but not altogether fanciful and though the physical appearance and attributes of such imaginary beings may have been over-emphasised or misconceived, yet facts known to me indicate that we are not really lonely in our struggle, that our destiny is not left to haphazard, that there is no such thing as *laisser faire* in a highly organised universe. Help may be rejected but help is available, ministry of benevolence surrounds us—a cloud of witnesses—not witnesses only but helpers, agents like ourselves of the immanent God." [1]

[1] See Sir Oliver Lodge's Reason and Belief, Part I, Ch. V.

CHAPTER II

Missionary Work at Mecca

Being convinced of the divine warrant to spread the revealed religion the Prophet began to preach unobtrusively in the circle of his relatives, friends and acquaintances, and tried to wean them from idolatry. He forbade the worship of idols and taught the unity of God and the existence of a future world, where the souls of all human beings would be punished or rewarded according to their acts. Daily prayers to God, the giving of alms [1] and the observance of one month's fast were made obligatory for the spiritual progress of the Moslems. Learning was highly encouraged and honoured and the equality and brotherhood of man were promulgated; usury, drinking, gambling, adultery, calumny and unclean foods were forbidden; particular stress was laid upon truth, chastity, faithfulness, mercy, justice and observance of the rights of others. All these rites and duties were not prescribed simultaneously. They were promulgated gradually as

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Prophet.

[1] It is obligatory on every Moslem to spend every year $\frac{1}{40}$th of his cash money including jewellery in charity. This is called "Zakat."

occasion required. The origin of some of the rites and duties will appear in the following pages.

Hadzrat Khadija won the high honour of being the first convert to the new religion named Islam. She offered with the Prophet, the prayers which were made obligatory upon him and his followers. Soon after this Aly, Zaid, son of Harith (the liberated slave of the Prophet) and Abu Bakr accepted Islam. Abu Bakr was a wealthy merchant and a man of clear judgment, prudence and honesty. He had considerable influence over the Koreish who respected him. The conversion of such a man had a great moral effect. Owing to his influence Othman, the Third Caliph, Saad-bin Waqqas and Zobeyr-bin Awam, Talha bin Obeydullah and Abdur Rahman bin Awf adopted the faith. Saad, a nephew of Amina, the mother of the Prophet, was at this time about sixteen years old. His military genius won for the Moslems the Persian empire. Zobeyr and Talha were of about the same age as Saad. Zobeyr's father Awam was a cousin of Khadija and his mother Sufia was an aunt of the Prophet. He fought with conspicuous bravery in the battles of Badr and Ohod. Though he took the field against Hadzrat Aly, he had the honesty of giving up hostility when he was convinced of his mistake. Talha, a near kinsman

The first converts to Islam.

of Abu Bakr turned out a great warrior, who saved the life of the Prophet in the battle of Ohod. Abu Obayda bin Jarrah, the conqueror of Syria, Sayd-bin Zaid, a cousin of Omar, Sayd's wife Fatima, Arqam and the slaves Bilal and Abdullah bin Masud were also among the early converts.

Though the Prophet preached unobtrusively in the circle of his relatives, friends and acquaintances and the small band of Moslems said their prayers in solitary places, his doctrines were noised abroad. The Koreish held him to ridicule. They would point slightingly at him as he passed and would say "There goeth the man of the children of Abd-ul-Muttalib to speak unto the people about the heavens." But soon a change for the worse occurred in their attitude.

In the fourth year of the Mission, the Prophet received divine command to call the public at large to his faith. With this object he invited the Koreish to a meeting on the hill of Safa. Here he denounced the idols of the nation, pointed out the vices and the cruel practices which were rife among them, predicted terrible hell fire and unspeakable torments for the idolaters in the world to come and invited them to profess his noble and pure religion. But idolatry and vices took too deep a root among them to be eradicated in a day. They

were also interested in keeping up the idolatry, as they were guardians of the idols in the Kaaba, where the Arabs used to flock in times of pilgrimage. They therefore turned a deaf ear to him and left the place in disgust. Abu Lahab an uncle of the Prophet cried "fie" to him. On account of this impertinence, he and his wife (who too was a great enemy of the Prophet) subsequently came in for censure in the verses of holy Qoran itself. Soon after the abortive meeting, he instructed Aly to prepare a few dishes and invite his kinsmen, that is, the children of Hashim. About forty guests responded to the invitation. Addressing the assembly, he said, he had in his possession the good things of this world and the next and inquired who among them would be his assistant, his brother, his legatee and his representative. All kept silent, but the young Aly got up and boldly offered his services.

As the Prophet would henceforth publicly denounce the idols and the idolaters, the Koreish on their part began to persecute him and his followers. They would mock him; would throw dirt and filth on him and his followers when at prayer; would incite the children and the bad characters to pursue him and to insult him; and would scatter thorns over the places he used to frequent. In this last act Ummul-Jamil, wife of Abu Lahab an uncle of the Prophet was

very active.[1] On one occasion when the Prophet prostrated himself in prayers, an infidel put his foot on the holy neck so violently that his eyes were about to come out. On another occasion, when he bowed down in prayers in the vicinity of the Kaaba, Oqba brought the entrails of a camel and put them on his shoulders. He quietly remained long in this posture. At last his daughter Fatima, who happened to come there, removed the entrails. When the Prophet got up, he with marvellous forbearance prayed for the welfare of the Koreish.

Probably to guard himself against insults and molestations, the Prophet occupied the house of Arqam on the gentle rise of the hill of Safa. Being on the prescribed walk from Marwa to Safa, it was accessible to all pilgrims. Persons showing any inclination towards Islam would be taken to this house where the Prophet would explain to them his doctrines. Many notable persons professed Islam in this house, hence it was afterwards styled Darul Islam or the House of Islam. But inspite of these persecutions, Hadzrat Mohammed bravely stuck to his holy and noble work. Finding it hopeless to win over the Meccans to his faith he turned his attention to the strangers who used to come to Mecca on

[1] On account of her cruel persistent persecution, she has been described in the Koran as "Hammalatal Hatab," or "the bearer of faggots to hell."

pilgrimage. To frustrate the object of the Prophet in this direction, the Koreish posting themselves in the suburbs of the city would depict him as a magician and advise the strangers to shun him and to guard themselves against him. They also redoubled their persecution in other directions. Each family began to torture its members and slaves who became converts to the new faith. These unfortunate persons used to be imprisoned, and starved and tortured in the hill of Romdha and the valley of Batha.[1]

Persecution of Hadzrat Bilal and Ammar bin Yasir.

Omaiya son of Khallaf would lead his slave Bilal, the famous Muazzin to Batha and there would lay him on the earth with his face turned towards the scorching sun. He would then place a big block of stone on his chest and say that he would remain in the same posture until he died or abjured his faith. Bilal in answer would repeatedly declare his belief in one God. This state of things continued for several days. One day Abu Bakr by chance witnessed this torture and was deeply moved. He at once purchased him and gave him his freedom in order to relieve him of his pains. Khobab and Ammar bin Yasir bore permanent marks of torture, which

[1] Sir William Muir thinks that the words Romdha and Batha are not names of places, but they mean gravel and valley.

in after years they used to exhibit with pride to a wondering generation. Suheib, son of Sinan, was a native of Mosul or some neighbouring village. His father or uncle was the Persian Governor of Obolla. A band of Greeks captured him and took him to Syria and perhaps to Constantinople also. Subsequently he was sold as a slave to Abdullah bin Jodaan, who gave him freedom. He acquired considerable wealth by commerce and embraced Islam. Having no patron, he became the object of persecution. When he desired to leave Mecca to join the Prophet at Medina, the Koreish would not let him go unless he gave up all his wealth. He readily parted with his money and started for Medina. When the Prophet heard of the incident he exclaimed "Suheib, verily hath made a profitable bargain." Such were the charms and excellences of the new faith that it would readily captivate all noble souls, inspite of persecution. Religion was dearer to them than wealth and even life.

When persecution failed, the Koreish attempted to bribe the Prophet.

Seeing that persecutions were of no avail, they tried to bribe the Prophet. Otba, son of Rabia, approached Hadzrat Mohammed and proposed to present to him a fortune greater than that possessed by any other Koreish. He also offered him the highest honour and dignity and ended with the proposal

of making him their king provided he consented to refrain from his mission. But wealth, honour and power were nothing to him. The divine fire that burnt within him could not thus be quenched. It was destined to infuse a new life in the best and greatest portion of the then known world. The Prophet in reply read out a few verses from the holy Koran which had predicted visitations for the Meccans, similar to those which had befallen the Aadites and the Thamudites, if they remained refractory.

Refutation of certain blasphemous charges.

Prejudiced European writers have called the holy Prophet an impostor and have ascribed the swoons at the time of the revelation of the Koranic verses to epileptic fit. Incidents like the one related in the preceding paragraph and his noble struggles against enormous odds in Mecca give the most emphatic lie to such blasphemous remarks. With the insight of a philosopher, Carlyle has observed, "It was greatly against the impostor theory the fact that he lived in this entirely unexceptional, entirely commonplace way, till the heat of his years was done. He was forty before he talked of any mission from heaven. All his irregularities real or supposed date after his fiftieth year, when the good Khodija died. For my share I have no faith in that." Again if the swoons had been due to epileptic fit, the Prophet would not have

received the Koranic verses during these periods nor could he have given them out immediately after. Truly Gibbon has remarked that the story of his epileptic fits was "an absurd calumny of the Greeks." More sensible writers who have perceived the force of the argument here advanced, have credited the Prophet with honesty and sincerity, but have pronounced the verdict of self-deception, that is to say that the Prophet unconsciously deceived, himself into an honest belief that he was inspired. This theory of honest self-deception is equally blasphemous and untenable. A man like the Prophet, who formulated true doctrines of godhead, who promulgated wise laws, who weaned the Arabs from idolatry in spite of severe resistance, who formed them into a compact nation, who commanded their respect and love and who was constantly and severely criticised by adversaries, is the last person to be the subject of such self-deception. The only conclusion that can be drawn after a careful study of the life of Hadzrat Mohammed is that he was certainly an inspired Prophet.

The Migration to Abyssinia.

To return to the subject, the Prophet persevered in his work, but his kind and highly sensitive nature was deeply moved by the sufferings of his helpless and poor followers. He therefore advised them to migrate to Abyssinia

where a tolerant Christian king ruled. Accordingly in the fifth year of the Mission, fifteen persons, of whom four were women, gave up their home and hearth and went over to Abyssinia. Among them were Hadzrat Othman with his wife Roqaya, Abdur Rahman bin Awf, a patriotic and wealthy merchant, Abdullah bin Masud and the youths Zobeyr and Musab. The virulent nature of the persecution may well be imagined when persons of the position of Othman, Abdur Rahman and Zobeyr were obliged to give up their home, their kinsmen and their country to be able to profess their faith in a foreign land. The exiles received kind treatment at the hands of Najashy or Negus and his people. There they passed their days in peace and comfort. This incident is known as the First Migration into Abyssinia. It proved a great moral victory, because it impressed the Koreish with the sincerity of the Moslems, who were ready to stick to their faith at any cost. It also presented a glorious and noble example of self-sacrifice for others to follow and suggested the possibility of an emigration into some parts of Arabia. After a sojourn of three months, the exiles returned to Mecca because they heard that the Koreish embraced Islam in a body. On their return they found that the information was false.[1]

[1] The rumour that the Koreish embraced Islam in a body originated from the fact that the Prophet in reciting sura LIII from the temple

Now a larger hroeic band again set out for Abyssinia. Excluding the children, the exiles numbered eighty-three men and eighteen women. The Koreish sent Amr-al-As to the Najashy with valuable presents to procure the surrender of the refugees. Hearing from Jaafar bin Abu Talib a glowing account of their religion, the Najashy returned the presents and rejected the request of Amr-al-As. Ere long Hadzrat Othman with his wife and thirty-one persons returned to Mecca and eventually migrated to Medina. The rest of the refugees

of Kaaba was tempted by Satan to say, "And see ye not Lat and Uzza. And Manat the third besides? These are the exalted Females, and verily their intercession is to be hoped for." On hearing the above sentences the idolatrous Koreish present in the Kaaba were very much pleased and they all bowed down to God along with the Prophet and promised to follow him. The angel Gabriel soon corrected the passage and the holy Prophet published the correct sentences which ran thus:—"And see ye not Lat and Uzza. And Manat the third besides? They are naught but names which ye and your fathers have invented." Tabari, Waqidy and Ibn Ishaq have given the above story but Ibn Hisham has omitted it. Later Moslem writers have declared the story to be heretical—Moulana Shibli in Siratun-Nabi says on the authority of Mawahib that the Prophet recited the correct verses, but some wicked idolater distorted them and the verses in their changed form gained currency. It seems to me that the explanation of Maulana Shibli is not correct, because the Koran itself appears to contain a reference to this incident in the following verses:

"And verily they had well-nigh tempted thee from what we revealed to thee to forge against us something false; and then they would have taken thee as friend;

And had we not prevented thee, thou hadst well-nigh incline l to them a little."

(Sura-Bani Israel.)

remained in Abyssinia, and rejoined the Prophet about the close of the expedition to Khaiber, in the seventh year of the Hegira.

Deputation of the Koreish to Abu Talib.

As the Koreish failed to get back the refugees, they turned their attention to the Prophet himself. A deputation approached Abu Talib and requested him either to punish the Prophet or to make him over to them for punishment for his abuse of the idols and the idolaters. Abu Talib assuaged them with sweet words; they were pacified for the time being; but ere long they again came to him and said "we cannot have patience any longer with his abuse of us, our ancestors and our gods; wherefore either do thou hold him back from us or thyself take part with him that the matter may be decided between us." With these words they left his presence. Abu Talib foresaw grave danger in the firm words and determined attitude of the Koreish. He sent for Hadzrat Mohammed to inform him of what transpired and implored him not to cast a burden upon him heavier than he could bear. The Prophet was taken aback. He thought that his uncle was about to abandon him; but the courage of his convictions did not fail him. He gave the sublime reply:— "if they brought the sun to my right hand and the moon to my left, to force me back from my undertaking, verily I would not desist

therefrom until the Lord made manifest my cause or I perished in the attempt." But the thought of separation from his uncle was however too much for him, so he burst into tears. The noble Abu Talib being visibly moved rejoined "Depart in peace my nephew and say whatsoever thou desirest, for by the Lord I will not in any wise give thee up for ever."

The conversion of Hamza and Hadzrat Omar.

About this time there was an accession of considerable strength to Islam on account of the conversion of two notable persons namely, Hamza, the youngest son of Abdul Muttalib and Omar, son of Khattab. One day Abu Jahl a cousin of the famous warrior Khalid bin Walid for nothing insulted, mocked and abused the Prophet who bore all these things with extraordinary patience and did not utter a single word in reply. At last the patience and endurance of the Prophet got the better of the malice and perseverance of Abu Jahl, who failed to make any impression. Hearing of this incident Hamza, a man of extraordinary strength, courage and generosity, caught Abu Jahl by the hair, pulled him to and fro and handled him very roughly. He then approached the Prophet and inquired whether he was pleased on account of the chastisement of his enemy. The Prophet replied that he would be more pleased if Hamza professed Islam. These words had an extraordinary effect

upon Hamza who at once became an ardent follower of Islam. The conversion of Hadzrat Omar, an inveterate enemy of Islam, was more dramatic.[1] After his conversion, he became a tower of strength to Islam. At his request, the Prophet began to say prayers publicly in the Kaaba without any molestation.

The Koreish boycott the Hashimites.

On account of the conversion of Omar the Koreish became panic-stricken and in the seventh year of the Mission entered into a compact boycotting the descendants of Hashim. "They would not marry their women nor give their own women into marriage with them; they would sell nothing to them nor buy aught from them." In short they refused to have any relation whether social, commercial or political with them. The compact was written, sealed and suspended in the Kaaba to give it the sanctity of religion. Fearing a sudden attack, the children of Hashim with the notable exception of Abu Lahab left their houses to reside in the Sheb or defile in which was the dwelling house of Abu Talib. It was a well-protected place, guarded by hills and houses on three sides. At the entrance was a low gate through which, a camel could pass with difficulty. Here they lived for two or three

[1] For the story of the conversion, see the Life of Hadzrat Omar.

years in great hardship, as they were practically blockaded. They dared not come to the city except during the time of the pilgrimage, when according to custom all violence ceased. Their stock of corn and other necessaries of life ran short, but they could not replenish the same from the Koreish who would not have any transaction with them, nor were they strong enough to send a caravan of their own. The cries of half-famished children softened the heart of good many persons. Hashim bin Amr, who had an uterine brother among the Hashimites, used at times to supply them with corn stealthily at night. Hakim, a grandson of Khawaylid, also used secretly to supply his aunt Khadija with her requirements. Once Abu Jahl who saw Hakim to take some goods to his aunt, threatened to disgrace him and attempted to prevent the act by force. Hakim overpowered Abu Jahl with kicks and accomplished his pious task. These occasional helps were quite inadequate. The miseries of the Hashimites grew worse daily. Besides the physical hardship, the missionary work of the Prophet practically came to a standstill as he could not preach except at the time of the pilgrimage and even then Abu Lahab would follow him and call him a lying unbeliever. Amidst all these difficulties, the holy Prophet never lost heart. His exemplary bearing extorted respect for his religion. His earnest prayers for

divine help bore fruit at last. The Omniscient Mind communicated to him the fact that the sealed contract in writing was devoured by insects. The Prophet gave the news to Abu Talib, who with a band of followers went to the Kaaba and requested the assembled chiefs to cancel the compact against the Hashimites if the document had been worm-eaten. A feeling of sympathy with the Hashimites was already created in a few minds. The proposal of Abu Talib was therefore readily accepted by the assembly. The document was examined and found to be worm-eaten. The partizans of the Prophet now found their opportunity. Abul Bokhtari, Zohair, Mutim and two others declared the compact null and void. Arming themselves they proceeded to the Sheb of Abu Talib and requested the Hashimites to come to the city. The Hashimites thus regained their freedom.

The death of Hadzrat Khadija and Abu Talib.

In this the tenth year of the Mission, Hadzrat Khadija, the devoted wife of the Prophet, breathed her last. Ere long Abu Talib, the influential protector and uncle of the Prophet, followed her to the grave. On account of the losses, the year is known as the "Year of Mourning" The bereavements, while they fell as heavy blows on the Prophet, served as a signal for the Koreish to renew their persecution with the greatest energy.

Visit to Tayif.

The position of the Prophet now became critical. To give up his mission was impossible; the idea was utterly repugnant to his sense of duty and it never crossed his mind. He must either win or die in the struggle. He pondered over the subject calmly and thought that his mission might be successful in some other part of the country. Tayif, famous for its fertile gardens and plantations, was only abou 70 miles to the east of Mecca. This city therefore naturally attracted his attention. Hardly a fortnight had elapsed from the death of Abu Talib, when he set out with Zaid for Tayif. He approached three principal men who were brothers and one of whom had a Koreishite wife but with no effect. He exposed the folly of worshipping idols; and called the Tayfites to the worship of one Great and All-powerful God but to no purpose. Enraged at the outspokenness of the Prophet they abused him and incited the children who mocked at him, clapped at him and made Tayif too hot for him. In despair he left the city after a sojourn of 10 days. A rabble threw stones at him and followed him till evening. When the mob dispersed the wearied Prophet sat under the shade of some trees at the foot of the surrounding hills, at a distance of 2 or 3 miles from the city. He bled from both his legs which were injured and the

faithful Zaid in attempting to shield him received a severe wound in the head. Close by was a garden of Otba and Shayba two wealthy Meccans. Seeing the distressed condition of the Prophet they sent him a tray of grapes. When the Prophet was refreshed, he preferred in all humility the following touching prayers to Heaven :—"Oh Lord, I complain unto Thee of the feebleness of my strength, and the poverty of my expedients; and of my insignificance before mankind. Oh Thou most Merciful, Thou art the Lord of the weak and Thou art my Lord. Into whose hands wilt Thou abandon me? Into the hands of the strangers that beset me round or of the enemy to whom Thou hast given the mastery over me? If Thy wrath be not upon me, I have no concern; but rather Thy favour is the more wide upon me. I seek for refuge in the light of Thy gracious countenance, by which the darkness is dispersed and peace ariseth for this world and the next, that Thy wrath light not upon me nor Thine indignation. It is Thine to show anger until Thou art pleased and there is not any power or resource but in Thee."[1] After necessary rest, the Prophet proceeded on his homeward journey, and again set his foot in Mecca under the protection of Mutim, a descendant of Abd Shams. When the Prophet reached

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Life of the Prophet.

the Kaaba, Mutim stood upright on his camel and called aloud "O ye Koreish, verily I have given the pledge of protection unto Mohammed; wherefore let not any one amongst you molest him." "There is something lofty and heroic in this journey of Mahomet to Tayif; a solitary man, despised and rejected by his own people, going boldly forth in the name of God—like Jonah to Nineveh—and summoning an idolatrous city to repentance and to the support of his mission. It sheds a strong light on the intensity of his own belief in the divine origin of his calling."[1] On his return from Tayif, the Prophet married a lady named Sauda. She was the widow of one of the early Moslems named Sakran, who had migrated to Abyssinia, but had died in Mecca on his return. To cement his friendship with Abu Bakr, he also married Ayisha who was at the time only 6 or 7 years old.

Resumption of the preaching to the pilgrims.

The prospect of gaining over the Meccans to the new faith was now gone for good and the hopes of successful missionary work in Tayif were shattered for ever. The horizon of the Prophet at this time was gloomy to the extreme, but his firm convictions in his own mission and his unbounded faith in his Lord kept him up. He resumed his preaching to the

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Life of the Prophet.

pilgrims who flocked to Mecca at the time of the Hajj or the Pilgrimage.' "Mohamet thus holding out his people at bay; waiting in the expectation of victory; to outward appearance defenceless and with his little band as it were in the lion's mouth; yet, trusting in His Almighty power whose messenger he believed himself to be, resolute and unmoved; presents a spectacle of sublimity paralleled only, in the Sacred Records, by such scenes as that of the Prophet of Israil, when he complained to his Master, "I, even I only, am left."[1]

The First Pledge of Aqaba.

One day in the valley of Mina, he met six persons of the tribe of Khazraj who came from Yathreb (now Medina) on a pilgrimage. These men must have been influenced by the pure theism of their neighbours, the Jews. They heard from them of a Messiah or a Prophet who was to arise. The fame of Hadzrat Mohammed must have also reached them. Therefore when the Prophet explained his doctrines to them, they readily perceived their truth and embraced the new faith. On their return to Yathreb, they talked over the subject with others and secured a few converts. In the meantime the Prophet passed an anxious time, as he was not sure of the return of the men, but to his great relief twelve

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Life of the Prophet.

representative men soon came to Mecca and on the hill of Aqaba pledged themselves to follow the Prophet in everything that was right. This pledge is called the First Pledge of Aqaba. Subsequently at their request, the Prophet sent the devoted Musaab to teach them the principles of *Islam.* This young man himself had embraced Islam inspite of the bewailings and reproaches of his affectionate mother. His relatives had kept him in durance but he had escaped and migrated to Abyssinia. On his return he was deputed to Medina, where he threw himself heart and soul into his work. In a year Islam made its appearance in almost all the families of Medina.

The Miraj.

In Rabi I of the twelfth year of the Mission occurred the famous vision of the Miraj or the Ascension to Heaven *in which the Prophet* beheld *that the* angel Gabriel conducted him on a winged heavenly *animal* named *Buraq*, from Mecca past Medina to the temple of Jerusalem, where he was welcomed by all the Prophets of bygone ages. After prayers in that holy shrine, he was conducted to the heavenly spheres and at last he found himself in the awful and sublime presence of God, where even Gabriel had no access. This noble vision was not an idle dream. It was one of the means by which the Universal soul revealed Himself and His mysteries to the

Prophet. He came into closest touch with his Creator and became thoroughly acquainted with the mysteries of creation. On this occasion the five daily prayers of a Moslem became obligatory. Round this inspiring and glowing subject innumerable poetic and romantic stories have naturally grown up.[1]

The Second Pledge of Aqaba.

In this year the Moslems of Yathreb came to Mecca in a body to the great delight of the Prophet. By appointment they met him in the still hours of night near the hill of Aqaba. They came to the spot by twos and threes and in this way 73 men and 2 women assembled. These precautions were taken to keep the proceedings of the meeting secret lest the Koreish proved mischievous. The men invited the Prophet to their city and pledged themselves to defend him. This pledge came to be known as the Second Pledge of Aqaba. After the departure of the caravan of Yathreb, the Koreish pursued them, as they got scent of the matter, but they found only one man, namely, Saad bin Obadah, whom they dragged to Mecca by his long hair. He was however released without further maltreatment, as he secured the sympathies of a Meccan, whom he rendered some service in Yathreb.

[1] According to some writers as Tabri the Miraj took place very shortly after the revelation of the first verse of the holy Qoran.

CHAPTER III

THE HIJRAT OR THE FLIGHT TO MEDINA IN JUNE 622 A.D.

The Hijrat.

On the strength of the Second Pledge of Aqaba, Hadzrat Mohammed advised the Moslems to betake themselves to Yathreb, but he himself bravely remained at his post amidst all dangers and persecution. Gradually the Moslems left Mecca for Yathreb. At last some quarters became wholly deserted and only the Prophet, Abu Bakr and Aly remained in Mecca. Fearing that some day the Prophet himself might leave the city only to return to wreak vengeance, the Meccans decided to murder him. On the advice of Abu-Jahl they selected one man from each tribe for this horrible deed. These men surrounded the house of the Prophet, who by divine inspiration became aware of the intended crime and quietly left the house, asking Hadzrat Aly to lie down in his bed and covering him with his green mantle to lull the suspicion of the enemies. Escaping from his room Hadzrat Mohammed went to the house of Abu Bakr whence they both set out under cover of night to take shelter

in the cave of mount Thur about an hour and a half's journey to the south. In the morning the Koreish went mad with rage, when they found that Hadzrat Mohammed had escaped. They made a vigorous search for the fugitives and set a price of 100 camels for their capture but all to no purpose. At one time they came very near the cave where the Prophet and his companion were resting. Hadzrat Abu Bakr, cried out in despair: "If one of them look towards his feet, he will see me; we are only two." The Prophet gave the noble reply that God was with them. Taking the cave to be vacant, the Koreish turned back without searching it. In this cave the two refugees lived for three nights. Every evening Amr bin Foheira, a freed slave of Abu Bakr, used to visit the cave stealthily with a few goats and give them a plentiful supply of milk. Abdullah, a son of Abu Bakr undertook to bring to the cave at night the informations he gathered in the city and to obliterate the foot-prints of the goats. The duty of his sister Asama was to bring food every night to the hiding place. In the evening of the second day it transpired that the Koreish had given up the search and settled down to normal conditions of life, though they had proclaimed a reward of 100 camels to the capturer of the Prophet. It was now time to start for Yathreb or Medina. Abdullah was instructed to make arrangements

for the journey to be undertaken in the next evening. A guide who was wandering about on the summit of Mount Thur with two swift camels which Abû Bakr had purchased for the anticipated journey, came to the cave at the appointed time. Asama also appeared with some cooked food. In hurry, she forgot to bring the thong with which to fasten the wallet. She tore her girdle and with one piece tied the wallet and with the other secured it to the gear of the camel. This incident earned for her the honourable surname of Zatun Nitaqayn or "she of the two shreds." The Prophet with the guide rode on the camel named Al Kaswa and Abu Bakr with Amir mounted the other. Leaving the ordinary route to the right, the party started for Medina by unfrequented paths. It was June of the year 622 A.D. By morning they reached the camp of a party of the Bani Khozaa, where an Arab lady gave to the thirsty and weary group a sufficient quantity of milk. In the evening they joined the common road to Medina in the belief that all danger was over. They did not proceed far when Suraqa, a fierce warrior who had promised to capture the Prophet overtook him but when he came near, his horse reared and fell down. Panic-stricken by the incident he asked for pardon which was granted. Tempted by the promised reward, several persons came out in search of the Prophet, but Suraqa

persuaded all of them whom he met to turn back. At last Hadzrat Mohammed by forced marches reached Medina in safety, performing the journey in eight days which usually takes eleven.[1] Thus ended one of the grandest periods of the Prophet's life. The families of the Prophet and Hadzrat Abu Bakr were not molested by the Koreish. Hadzrat Aly remained in Mecca for three days during which period he was busy in returning the properties, which had been kept in custody with the Prophet. This work over, he joined the Prophet in Medina.

Round the story of the Flight many noble but doubtful legends have grown up. It is said that a spider wove cob-webs over the mouth of the cave and two pigeons made their nest over it. When the Koreish approached the cave they saw the pigeons fly away and noticed the cob-webs with pigeon's eggs thereon, so they were convinced that no living being could be inside the cave. There is also a story that Abu Bakr found many holes in the cave, which he stopped with his turban, lest some reptile might come up and bite the Apostle. The material ran short before the last hole could be closed. He therefore placed his feet on it. A venomous serpent came up that hole and bit Abu Bakr who

[1] This migration or Hijrat took place on the 20th June or 4th of Rabi I of 622 A.D., and from this year commences the Mohammedan era of the Hegira.

felt severe pain, but did not move lest the Apostle who was sleeping with his head on his thigh, should be disturbed. When Abu Bakr's tears accidentally fell on the Apostle, he got up. Learning the cause of Abu Bakr's pain, he put his saliva on the bite and Abu Bakr was cured.

The news of the departure of the Prophet from Mecca soon reached Yathreb. The Moslems of the city daily expected the arrival of the holy guest. Every morning they used to come to the first rocky ridge at a distance of one or two miles, on the road to Mecca to welcome the Prophet. Here they anxiously watched his arrival till the intense heat of the summer sun drove them home. On Monday the 12th of Rabi I they assembled and dispersed as usual. Shortly after their departure the weary travellers passing over rocky and barren country in the hottest season of the year reached the summit of the mountain bordering on the valley of Al Aqiq about 4 or 5 miles to the south of the city which was now clearly visible. Though the Prophet was aware of the sincerity and friendship of the Moslems, he was not quite sure of the feeling of the Jews and the infidels who formed the bulk of the population. Under the circumstances it was considered undesirable to put the loyalty of the Moslems to severe test by entering into the city at once. The Prophet therefore requested the guide to take them to Qoba, a beautiful suburb,

about 2 or 3 miles to the south of the city. A Jew who first saw the Prophet from the top of his house cried out to a Moslem that the person whom they expected was coming. The joyful news soon spread throughout the city like a wild fire. Moslems flocked from every part of the city to welcome the Prophet. He was lodged in the house of Kolthum, a hospitable Aswite chief, who had entertained many emigrants on their first arrival to Medina. Here the Prophet laid the foundations of a mosque, which was subsequently honoured in the Koran with the name of the "Mosque of Godly fear." Even now it is considered an act of great piety to say one's prayers in the mosque.

CHAPTER IV

The Foundation of a Religious Commonwealth in Medina.

The Prophet's entry into Medina and his residence there.

After a stay of four days the Prophet with Hadzrat Abu Bakr, mounted on Al Kaswa, set out for the city, as it soon appeared that the non-Moslems were not at least openly hostile to him. Men dressed in their best attire flocked round him. The entry soon took the character of a triumphal procession. In the valley near Qoba, he offered prayers to Heaven with about one hundred Moslems and delivered a sermon on the beauties of his religion. It was a Friday which henceforth became the day of public worship. As the procession marched through the city, every one earnestly requested the Prophet to be his guest and a few even caught the reins of his camel to stop him. He spoke courteously to all but to prevent disappointment and jealousy, he requested the men to let his animal have her free will. He would dismount wherever she would sit. This was a fine stroke of policy. The animal went her way and at length sat down in a spacious open yard close to

the house of Abu Ayub of the Bani Najjar tribe from which the mother of Abdul Muttalib had sprung. Abu Ayub came up and offered to the Prophet the higher storey of his house, but he preferred the lower one as it was more accessible to his followers. Abu Ayub entertained him with choicest viands. Other Moslems also used to send to him daily the best dishes as long as he remained in the house. Yathreb henceforth came to be known as Medinatun Nabi, that is, the City of the Prophet, or simply Medina. Zaid and another slave were sent on two camels with 500 dirhems to bring the family of the Prophet. They returned in due course with the families of the Prophet and Abu Bakr, accompanied by Abdullah and Talha.

The building of the Apostolic Mosque in Medina.

At Medina the first concern of the Prophet was to erect a mosque. The piece of land on which his camel had sat belonged to two minor orphan boys under the guardianship of Asad bin Zorara. These boys desired to make a free gift of the land, but the generous offer was not accepted. The land was purchased for 10 dinars which was paid by Hadzrat Abu Bakr. It was an uncared for plot of land consisting of some graves of infidels and thorny bushes and a few date trees. Even now some of these trees exist in a railed space called Fatima's garden. The bones in the graves were dug up and

deposited elsewhere. The site was then cleared and levelled and the foundations of a mosque about 100 cubits square were laid. The walls of the building were made of stones joined together with mud. The roof, made of rafters of palm trees, was thatched with leaves of the same tree. On the south was a gate for the entrance of the public and on the west was another gate named Bab Atika or Bab Rahmah, that is the gate of Mercy. At the time of prayer the Prophet stood near the northern wall facing due north towards Jerusalem which was then the Kibla or the centre to which the Moslems turned. In this part of the mosque compound, a place was set apart for homeless Moslems for whose use a Saffah or sheltered bench or pavement was made in the open ground beyond the northern wall. From this circumstance they were named Ahl Saffah. The Prophet would usually send to them portions from his own table and the noble example was soon imitated by his followers. In the second year of the Hegira, when the Kibla was changed by divine orders towards the Kaaba, a gate was opened in the northern wall and the one on the south was closed. On the east was a gate called Babun-nesa or the women's porch leading to the private apartments of the Prophet. On this side of the mosque were built rooms for his wives, Ayesha and Sauḍa and his daughter Roquaya. In later years when the Prophet married other

wives, more apartments were added, all of which opened into the mosque by private entrances. The Moslems showed commendable zeal in completing the mosque. The Prophet himself assisted with his holy hands the building of that unostentatious structure. When questioned why he did not build a permanent roof, he replied "The thatch is as the thatching of Moses, rafters and small pieces of wood; man's estate is more fleeting even than this." Such was the origin of the present magnificent building.

The Foundations of a Common-wealth.

In the next place he turned his attention to lay the foundations of a commonwealth. Though his religion spread rapidly and embraced nominally the whole city in its fold, scepticism lay hidden to a considerable extent. Abdullah bin Ubbay, a Khazrajite chief, who was about to be elected ruler of Medina, lost his chance on account of the arrival of the Prophet. He was therefore unfriendly to the new regime. Round him gathered all those persons who were sceptical of the claims of the Prophet or were unfriendly to his rule. These persons were called Munafiqins, *i. e.*, the Hypocrites or the Disaffected. The existence of this class was a danger to the Moslem community. For this reason the Prophet with the genius of a statesman granted a charter in which the rights and duties of the

Moslems were defined. It was laid down that all wrong-doers would be punished without any regard to their rank and influence. Religious toleration and protection were granted to the Jews, provided they would join with the Moslems in defending Medina and would accept the terms of the charter. All disputes among those on whom the charter was binding were to be referred to the Prophet. The charter thus practically created a commonwealth with the Prophet at its head. The Jews attached to the tribes of Awf, Najjar, Aus and a few other tribes accepted the terms of the charter. There were two parties among the Moslems, *viz.*, the Muhajarins and the Ansars. The Moslems who gave up their home and hearth in Mecca and emigrated to Medina for the sake of their religion were called the Muhajarins, *i. e.*, the Refugees. The Moslems of Medina were called Ansars, *i. e.*, Helpers because they pledged themselves to defend the Refugees.

The climate of Medina proved injurious to the health of the Muhajarins. In summer the days are intensely hot but the nights are cool and often chilly. The cold in winter is severe specially after rain. Occasionally it rains in heavy showers, flooding the neighbouring country with water. Then a portion of Medina between the city and the southern suburb remains under water, making the atmosphere damp. Owing to

this peculiar climate almost all the Muhajarins except the holy Prophet contracted fever.

Brothorhood among the Ansars and the Muhajirs.

They therefore pined for their home. To raise their spirits and to cement the ties of friendship among them and the Ansars, the Prophet established a brotherhood among them. Each Muhajir was made the brother of an Ansar of equal rank. This new bond became so strong and effective that in some cases the Ansars shared their properties with their adopted brothers, just as they would have done with a natural brother.

Religiuos rites and institutions.

It has been stated before that five daily prayers and perhaps lustration became obligatory in the night of the journey to Heaven. The life of a Moslem was thus a daily round of prayers. It began with a prayer at dawn and ended with one at night. Though these daily prayers became and at the present moment are a matter of form with a large number of persons, still they saved and even now save them from many evil thoughts and sins. On the other hand they were and still are very good levers to raise thousands of good souls to a high spiritual level. At first most of the prayers consisted of two Rakats or series of genuflexions and formularies, but after a month of the Prophet's arrival in Medina, most of them were made of four Rakats.

The daily prayers could be performed anywhere individually or in congregation, but at noon of every Friday a public service would be held, to which all Moslems were expected to join. After prayers a sermon with reference to current topics followed. About eighteen months after the Prophet's arrival at Medina revelations in the Qoran made the fast in the month of Ramdzan obligatory. It first fell in winter, but later on when the solar year was replaced by the lunar year, the fast shifted in cycle to every season of the year. At the conclusion of the fast, came the ceremony of the Idul-fetr or "breaking of fast." In the morning of the Id day all Moslems clad in their best attire would proceed with the Prophet to the Musalla or place of prayer on the Meccan Road outside the city. Every Moslem of means would bring with him the Fetrah or the prescribed measure of date, raisin, barley or wheat. After the prayers and sermon, the Prophet would distribute the alms among the poor to make them independent for that day.

The pilgrimage and the sacrifice

The pilgrimage to Mecca for the circuit of the holy Kaaba and the journey to Arafat form one of the ordinances of Islam; but the observance of this rite is obligatory only to those who have the means to undertake the journey. It is sufficient if a man perform the pilgrimage, once in his life. In the second year

of the Hegira, the rite of sacrifice on the 10th day of the Zulhijjah, that is, after the completion of the pilgrimage, became obligatory in commemoration of the sacrifice of Abraham.

Zakat or the alms.

Zakat or alms at the rate of one-tenth of the income is one of the religious duties. Subsequently it was levied at the rate of 2½ per cent. of the capital because it was supposed that this sum represented 10 per cent. of the profit. The revenue was used for the support of the poor and for other public purposes. A belief in one Almighty God and his Prophet Hadzrat Mohammed and in the future world and the observance of the rites and ceremonies, and duties described above are the main features of Islam.

CHAPTER V

Appeal to Arms in Self-defence.

The battle of Badr; Ramdzan of A. H. II; 624 A. D.

The Meccans continued in their persecution of the Moslems though they left their city of birth. They and their allies raided the country up to the vicinity of Medina, destroyed the trees of the Moslems and carried away their cattle. For these reasons, the Prophet with divine inspiration decided to carry on war with the infidels. In course of time, he learnt that a caravan of the Koreish under Abu Sufian was returning from Syria. Considering a battle unlikely, he without making full preparations started from Medina to intercept the caravan. He had with him about 300 men, seventy camels and two horses, when he left Medina in the month of Ramdzan of the second Hegira.

News of the intended attack reached Abu Sufian, who sent information of the danger to the Meccans and asked for prompt help. One thousand well equipped men under Abu Jahl soon started from Mecca. They had 700 camels and 100 horses with them. When the caravan approached the neighbourhood of Badr, a station

on the Medina to Mecca road, Abu Sufian came ahead to the place to ascertain if any danger was to be apprehended in that quarter. On inquiry he learnt that two strangers with two camels had rested in the place for a while. From the peculiar stones of Medina-dates in the dung of the camels, Abu Sufian at once guessed that the men were scouts of the Medina troops. He therefore hastened back to the caravan and turned to a different path closer to the sea. In their way the Meccan troops came across a second messenger of Abu Sufian, who informed them of the safety of the caravan, by avoiding the route through Badr. There was no longer any necessity for the Koreish to march on. Many of them were for a retreat but Abu Jahl persisted in proceeding to Badr with the object of overawing all Arabia, so that they might not again think of interfering with the caravan trade of the Koreish. Let us now turn to the camp of the Prophet. While he was at some distance from Badr, he heard that the Meccans were marching for the protection of the caravan. He called a council of war. All the chiefs were unanimously of opinion that an advance upon Badr should be made. Saad bin Muaz as spokesman of the Ansars said that they would follow the Prophet to the end of the earth if that were necessary. Then the Prophet said "Go forward with the blessing of God. For verily, he hath

promised me one of the two—the army or the caravan." Hadzrat Aly and a few others, who were sent to reconnoitre the rising ground near the springs, surprised the water-carriers of the Koreish and captured all of them except one who escaped. The chiefs questioned the prisoners about the army but they could not or would not give any information. They therefore began to maltreat the captives. When the incident came to the notice of the Prophet, he at once stopped the punishment. On conversing with them he with his usual sagacity inquired how many camels they daily slaughtered for their consumption. He was told that nine and ten camels were slaughtered on alternate days. From this data he pretty accurately estimated the strength of the enemy between 900 and 1000 men. It now transpired that instead of an easy prey a bloody battle awaited the Moslems.

The valley of Badr is bounded by steep hills on the north and the east. On the south is a low rocky range and on the west are a series of low sandy hillocks. A rivulet runs through the valley giving rise to a number of springs. The Koreish were encamped on the western side of the sandy hillocks. The Moslems halted on the eastern side, occupied the springs, guarded the main one, destroyed the others and hastily constructed a hut for the shelter of the Prophet as night was drawing nigh. It rained during

the night. In the morning, the Prophet himself drew up his men in battle array, forbade them to move except under orders and instructed them to prevent any outflanking movement by the discharge of arrows. He then retired to the hut and sent up to Heaven the following prayer :—"O Lord, I beseech Thee, forget not Thy promise of assistance and of victory. O Lord! if this little band be vanquished, idolatry will prevail and the pure worship of Thee will cease from off the earth." He soon returned to his troops as the Koreish were now advancing to attack them. The Moslem army stood speechless like dumb statues; memory of past injuries rankled in the breast of some: death and determination were visible in the countenance of all; they had no refuge or shelter but in their sword; death had no fear for them as it meant translation to paradise; in fact many coveted it. On the other hand there was no solidarity and enthusiasm among the Koreish. As their caravan had passed off safely, they had no strong motive to put in determined fighting; many of them were against the attack; but the incitement and exhortation of Abu Jahl led them to join in the battle. Nature seemed to be against them. The rain of the night made the march upon the sandy hillocks fatiguing and the rays of the rising sun fell uncomfortably over their faces.

The contending parties now engaged in a

fierce deadly struggle. According to the then custom of eastern warfare a few single combats took place at first. The brothers Shayba and Otba, sons of Rabia and Walid, son of Otba, stepped forward from the ranks of the Meccans and challenged three champions from among the Moslems. Three men of Medina came forward, but at a sign from the Prophet they receded and Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet and his cousins Ali and Obayda bin Harith bin Abdul Mutallib advanced to the combat. Aly attacked Walid, who fell down mortally wounded. Eager to avenge the death of his son Otba made a furious charge. Hamza, the Lion of God, met the charge and quickly despatched him. Now a struggle took place between Shayba and Obayda, both of whom were advanced in years. Shayba inflicted a severe wound on the leg of Obayda, in consequence of which he died a few days later. Aly and Hamza came to his rescue and quickly beheaded Shayba. The result of the combats had a depressing influence on the Meccans. The Moslems now charged with extraordinary bravery. Many individuals on both sides showed prodigies of valour like the heroes of the Iliad. Several desperate Meccan warriors swore to drink water from the strongly guarded cistern, but all of them lost their lives in the attempt. When Aswad advanced close to it, Hamza nearly

severed his leg from his body ; still he crawled on, drank water therefrom, kicked the cistern with his remaining leg and destroyed a portion of it, before Hamza put an end to his life. Muaz bin Amr brought down Abu Jahl by cutting his leg into two. This act drew on him the attack of Ikrama bin Abu Jahl, who nearly severed the arm of Muaz from his shoulder. As the dangling arm impeded Muaz in his movements, he pressed it with his foot, tore it off and pressed forward in the battle. Such were the heroes of Badr. When Abu Jahl was killed and many principal opponents of the Prophet fell down dead, the Meccan army wavered and retreated. The Moslems pursued them with redoubled energy turning the retreat into an ignominious rout. Forty-nine idolaters were killed and nearly the same number were made prisoners. One hundred and fifteen camels, 14 horses, a large store of leather, much equipage and armour fell into the hands of the victorious army. On the side of the Prophet only fourteen persons lost their lives. It was a glorious victory for the Moslems. They put to rout an army three times their number. It was a struggle between force and faith in which faith triumphed. Nadzr bin Harith and Okba bin Abi Moait, two of the prisoners who were inveterate enemy of the Moslems, were executed but the Prophet gave instructions for the kind

treatment of the others. The Moslems therefore provided them with food better than what they themselves consumed. One of them said in later days, "Blessings be on the men of Medina, they made us ride, while they themselves walked; they gave us wheaten bread to eat, when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates." It is therefore no wonder that several of the prisoners embraced Islam, by the time, their relatives came to ransom them. The rest of the prisoners were ultimately released in Medina on payment of ransom and a few, who were too poor to pay, were discharged for nothing. There was some dispute about the division of the spoil. Those who pursued the enemy at the risk of their lives and secured the booty claimed the whole or greater portion, while the persons whose duties were less active, claimed equal shares, because their duties and not their cowardice prevented them from pursuing the enemy. The dispute became so hot that the Prophet had to intervene. A revelation in the Koran set at rest the question of distribution of the spoils of war. A fifth was set apart for the Prophet and the poor. The remainder was divided equally among the soldiers. Each horseman however got two extra shares. On this occasion the Prophet got the famous sword Dzul Fiqar.

The Expedition of the Sawik and the story of Durther.

The Meccans began to smart under the memorable defeat suffered at Badr. Abu Sufian swore to lead an austere life until he again waged war against the Prophet. His wife Hind was still more inveterate; she took similar oath and did not shed a single drop of tear for her father Otba as she was thirsting for vengeance. Before an expedition on a larger scale could be organised, Abu Sufian with two hundred horsemen started on a raid. He reached the suburbs of Medina, destroyed fruit trees and killed two defenceless Moslems whom he happened to meet. The Prophet hearing of the outrage, pursued the men of Abu Sufian, who throwing down bags of "Sawik" (powdered green grain mixed with dates and sugar used as food) in order to lighten their burden, took to their heels. On account of this incident the expedition is called the "Expedition of Sawik." In the course of this expedition, a hostile warrior name Durther came to the Prophet, while he was sleeping under a tree. Hearing a noise Hadzrat Mohammed awoke and saw Durther with a drawn sword in his hand. Durther cried out, "Who can save you now?" The Prophet with promptitude replied, "God." Overawed by this characteristic reply Durther's sword fell down from his hand. Hadzrat Mohammed quickly picked it up and brandishing it said, "Who is there to save

you now ?" Durther replied, "Alas none!" The Prophet then returned the sword to Durther and advised him to learn to be merciful. Durther was much moved by this incident and in after years became a tower of strength to the cause of Islam.

Execution of Kaab bin Ashraf.

Kaab bin Ashraf, a Jewish chief and a poet, was an inveterate enemy of Islam. Hearing of the defeat suffered by the Koreish at Badr, he proceeded to Mecca in mourning, eulogised the Meccans who fell in the battle, satirised the Prophet and his followers and incited the Koreish to murder the Moslems. On his return to Medina, he insulted the Moslem ladies by addressing love songs to them. When the story of his misdeeds reached the Prophet, he justly exclaimed, "Who will ease me of the son of Ashraf for he troubleth me?" Accordingly Mohammed bin Moslama with a few other persons assassinated Kaab bin Ashraf by means of a stratagem. Kaab was guilty of high treason against the Moslem commonwealth and thus deserved the sentence of death. None disputes this proposition but some European writers have found fault with the Prophet for the method adopted in procuring the death of Kaab. Different ages and different countries have different methods of awarding and executing sentences. The Prophet practically declared Kaab guilty of treason and commanded

his death. Under the circumstances no guilt attaches to a man who executes that sentence by a stratagem. No one accuses a general of moral turpitude if he deceives his enemy by a stratagem and overpowers him. In this particular instance the Prophet was even not aware of the stratagem adopted. A few other executions about this time were of the same nature.

The battle of the "Sawik" was merely a raid. It was the precursor of a great battle. The idolaters made strenuous preparations for war.

The battle of Ohod; shawwal of A. H. III; 625 A. D.

In the third year of the Hegira, Abu Sufian with 200 horse and 3,000 men (of whom 700 were mailed veteran warriors) marched upon Medina and encamped in a well-chosen position to the west of the hill of Ohod. Hind and several other Meccan ladies accompanied the army to fire the enthusiasm of the troops with music and patriotic songs. Abu Sufian's men cut down the luxuriant crops of that fertile plain for forage and their camels roamed over the cultivated fields eating and destroying the standing crops that came in their way. The Meccans decided to halt there and draw out the Moslems rather than attack the city, where the houses and narrow roads would give the Moslems an enormous advantage. The Prophet thought it unwise to go out of the city and give battle. Abdullah bin Ubby the leader of the disaffected

who on this occasion was sincere for the protection of the city concurred in this view. The impetuous young men, whose number was considerable did not like the idea. It was too much for them to sit idly within the city while their fair fields were being destroyed by the enemy. They were for attacking their opponents hoping to destroy them as at Badr. At their earnest request the Prophet yielded and marched out of the city with 1,000 men. When he reached half way between Medina and Ohod Abdullah-ibn Ubby with about 300 men withdrew as he did not approve the idea of giving battle. Still the Moslems proceeded to the most unequal combat. Hadzrat Mohammed with the instinct of a born general, posted the archers on a hill, instructed them to harass the cavalry of the enemy and to prevent any attack from the rear. He requested them not to leave their posts on any account. The brave Moslem soldiers then charged the enemy with fury. The idolaters entered the list with equal courage and energy. They carried their idols in the centre and their women playing on musical instruments sang:

> "We are the daughters of the brave;
> On carpets we step delicately;
> Boldly advance, we shall embrace you,
> Turn back, and we shall shun you
> Shun you with disgust."

The principal companions of the Prophet, firm in their faith in God and His Messenger, fought like enraged lions and entered into the very centre of the Meccan army. Aly slew Talha bin Abdul Uzza, the Meccan standard-bearer, in single combat. Hamza laid low Talha bin Abdul Uzza's brother Othman, who stepped into Talha's position. Aly, Hamza, Zobeyr and Abu Dujana carried death and consternation wherever they appeared in the ranks of the enemy. The Meccan women fled and the men began to retreat. The Moslem archers seeing the enemy fall back, left their posts, in order to collect booty, inspite of the instruction of the Prophet to the contrary. Khalid bin Walid at once saw the mistake of the archers. He turned round with the cavalry under him and attacked the Moslems from the rear. The retreating Koreish rallied again. The Moslems were now in a very dangerous position. The idolaters made a serious charge upon the Prophet himself. His devoted companions gathered round him to lay down their lives in order to protect him. Talha bin Obeydullah warded off with his naked hand an arrow which disabled his finger. Abu Dujana shielded the Prophet with his person and did not move an inch though arrows after arrows struck him on the back. Ultimately he fell down dead. The Prophet received a blow which caused a gushing wound on his forehead

and drove two rings of his helmet into his cheek. Blood flowed profusely from the wounds covering his holy face. A stone hit him on the lip and broke a front tooth. He fell down but Talha gently raised him. An infidel soldier cried out that "the Prophet is dead." This news spread consternation among the Moslems, who being confounded stood motionless like statues. Kaab, son of Malik, contradicted the rumour upon which the Moslem soldiers fighting in another part of the field came to the rescue of the Prophet and after a sharp fight retreated with him to the hill. The Koreish on their part were extremely exhausted and perhaps were even imbued with secret fear. They had neither the energy nor the courage to attack Medina or the Moslems who retreated with the Prophet to the hill of Ohod, so they retraced their steps to Mecca. This memorable battle took place on the 7th of Shawwal. The dead among the Koreish numbered only twenty but the Moslems lost about 74 noble souls, among whom were Hadzrat Hamza and Musaab. Wahshi, a slave, who has been promised freedom if he could slay Hamza, wounded him fatally below the abdomen. Hind felt a savage satisfaction at his death. She chewed his liver and cut his nails, ear and nose, and carried them to Mecca as trophies. Musaab was the young man who with Asad bin Zorara spread Islam in

Medina. For his services the Prophet honoured him with the standard of the Refugees in the battle of Badr and also in this battle. On both occasions he fought bravely and justified his selection. The corpses of the Moslems were buried with blood stains in the field of Ohod, which henceforth became a place of pilgrimage. The Prophet used to visit the tombs of the departed brave warriors and invoke peace upon them. Once on the fourteenth of Shaban, that is the day of Shabibarat, the Prophet prayed for their salvation. Hence on this occasion the same prayer is repeated for the dear dead and the martyrs of Ohod in every Moslem household. Though the Moslems showed extraordinary courage in this battle, it was unfortunately a defeat. The enemies of the Prophet took advantage of the event and cited it as an argument against his prophetic claims.

Mohammedan law of inheritance.

Saad bin Rabia, a leader of the Bani Khazraj, was killed in the battle of Ohod. He left a widow and two daughters. According to the practice of the time Saad's brother took possession of all the properties left by him. The widow finding herself in distress, thought of appealing to the Prophet. With this object in view, she invited the Prophet and some of the chief companions to a feast. When the meal was over, she related in a pathetic manner the story

of her own distress and that of her two daughters. The Prophet asked her to wait for sometime, as he did not receive any divine command about inheritance. After a few days the Koranic verse about the inheritance was revealed according to which women such as wives, daughters and others had certain shares. When Saad's widow again saw the Prophet she was very glad to learn that she was to get one-eighth part and the two daughters were to get two-thirds of the properties of Saad. The remainder was to go to the brother. Even to the present day that Sura or Koranic verse governs the Mohammedan law of inheritance.

The expulsion of the Ban-Nadzir; 4 A. H. or 625 A. D.

After the battle of Ohod one Musalman killed two men of the Bani Amir tribe mistaking them for enemies. Hadzrat Mohammed was very sorry for this incident. He decided to compensate the relatives of the deceased. With this object he with a few disciples went to the Bani-Nadzir Jews to collect their share of the Diat or weregild. These Jews and some others were equally bound with the Moslems to pay the Diat as they accepted the Prophet's charter. They promised to pay but asked him to wait for a while. Observing sinister movements among them and divining their motive to kill him, he quietly left with his followers. Reaching Medina he sent Mohammed bin Moslama (the slayer of Kaab bin Ashraf) to these traitors

either to embrace Islam or to leave their country. They definitely refused to accept either of these terms, so they were besieged and their date-trees were destroyed. After 15 days, they agreed to evacuate their country, as they did not get any help from Medina or the Jews of the Bani Qorayza. They were allowed to take away with them all their moveable proper ties except arms. Fifty coats of mail, fifty stands of armour and three hundred and forty swords feil into the hands of the Moslems. With the consent of the Ansars the exceedingly fertile lands of the Jews were divided among the Muhajirins (who hitherto lived on the generosity of the Ansars) and two indigent citizens of Medina, who showed extraordinary valour in the field. This expulsion took place in the 4th year of the Hegira. Hitherto the Prophet used to employ the Jews for recording the despatches which were to be worded in Hebrew, but in this year he requested Zaid bin Thabit, a boy of 15 or 16 years, to master the Jewish or Syrian language. Zaid, the future collector of the Koran in the reigns of Hadzrat Abu Bakr and Othman, learnt Hebrew in a very short time. According to some reliable authorities the use of wine was forbidden in the Koran in this year.

Ghadzwatul Khanduq or the battle of the h; 5 A. H. or . D.

As the battle of Ohod was not decisive, Abu Sufian at the time of his departure, cried out, "We shall meet again, let it be after a

year at Badr." Hadzrat Omar, on behalf of the Prophet accepted the challenge. On account of scarcity due to drought the Koreish were unwilling to march on to Badr at the appointed time, so they sent one Nueim a neutral Arab, to Medina. He was to discourage the Moslems by false reports about the extraordinary preparations on the part of the Koreish. The stratagem had the desired effect. Several citizens of Medina were disinclined to proceed to Badr, but the Prophet was undaunted. He expressed his desire of marching to Badr even if he had to go alone. His bold and determined attitude encouraged his followers and soon a large army assembled round him. They proceeded to Badr and halted there for eight days transacting business in the annual fair. The Koreish left Mecca with two thousand infantry and fifty cavalry, but were obliged to retrace their steps owing to scarcity of provision. On account of this retreat in the 4th year of the Hegira they suffered much in prestige. They were therefore eager to blot out the disgrace. A few Jews of the Bani Nadzir tribe, who were expelled from Medina fanned the flame. They excited the Koreish and the Bedouin tribes, bound by alliance and sympathy with the same cause. Thus an army of ten thousand well equipped soldiers was raised. The allied army marched towards Medina and encamped within

a few miles of the city. To oppose this force the Prophet could muster only 3,000 men. Profiting by the experience gained at Ohod, he decided to remain in the city on the defensive. On the suggestion of Solman, formerly a Christian captive of Mesopotamia but now an adherent of Islam, the Prophet adopted a defensive stratagem familiar in Persia but unknown in Arabia. Under his instructions a deep trench was dug round the unprotected quarters of Medina. To encourage the workmen, the Prophet himself joined them in carrying away earth from the trench, which was completed with marvellous rapidity in the short space of six days. In this critical hour the Bani Qorayza Jews, who were bound by the terms of the charter, to defend the city against any foreign invasion not only failed to fulfil their part of the contract but ranged themsleves on the side of the allies. The invading army were taken aback by the trench which was a novel stratagem to them. Though they deprecated it and ridiculed it as unmanly they could not cross the trench in spite of their vastly superior number on account of the vigilance of the Moslem outposts. One day Ikrima son of Abu Jahl with a few others crossed it at a narrow and inadequately guarded point, and galloped to the front line of the Moslems. Noticing the advance, Hadzrat Aly with a band of brave warriors got into the rear of Ikrima,

occupied the narrow part and cut off his retreat. At this moment an aged but muscular chief of the allied army challenged any Moslem to a single combat. Aly accepted the challenge and falling upon his adversary defeated him. Taking advantage of the confusion Ikrima and his other followers made good their escape. On the next day the allied army made a tremendous attack in a body but failed to make any impression owing to the vigilance of the Moslems, who giving up their usual prayers incessantly kept watch at the trench, day and night, without any relief, as there were not sufficient men for the purpose. Notwithstanding the supreme efforts of the enemy, only five Moslems lost their lives and Saad bin Muaz was severely wounded by an arrow. Though the loss of the Moslems was insignificant and though the allied army failed to carry the city by assault the strain of ceaseless work had its effect. The Prophet became so very anxious for their safety that he even thought of gaining over the Ghatafan tribes by offering them, through Uyayna, the chief of the Fezara tribes, one-third of the produce of the date trees of Medina. The idea was given up on the advice of Saad bin Obada and Saad bin Muaz, the leaders of the Khazraj and the Aus, who would not give anything to the enemy except the sword. After a period of nearly three weeks, difference arose among the allies

and their horses began to die. With the insight of a statesman, the Prophet fomented the disunion. In this connection, he utilised the services of Nueim who had access to both parties. Now his sympathies were with the Moslems, as he secretly professed their religion. He approached the Bani Korayza in the guise of a friend and advised them to ask for hostages from the allies, so that they might not be left to their fate, in case the siege were raised. This plausible suggestion found favour with them. To the allies he represented that the Bani Korayza were unsound at heart and that they would ask for hostages to make them over to the Moslems. When the allies requested the Bani Korayza to attack the Moslems from the rear, they expressed their inability on account of their Sabbath and further asked for hostages. The allies now became convinced of the treachery of the Bani Korayza and their last hope of success was gone. When things came to such a pass, one night a strong wind blew overturning the tents of the allies, scattering their cooking utensils and putting out their lights. Disheartened, they gave up the siege and dispersed that very night. Thus the vast army which threatened the destruction of Medina and the Moslems disappeared miraculously, fulfilling a prophecy of the holy Prophet. This siege is known as Ghadzwatul Khanduq or the "Battle of the

Trench." It took place in the fifth year of the Hegira.

The punishment of the treacherous Bani Korayza.

Hadzrat Mohammed now turned his attention upon the faithless Bani Korayza. After a siege of 25 days they surrendered on condition that the decision of their fate was to be left to Saad-Ibn-Muaz, whose client they were. This fierce soldier who himself was wounded in the skirmishes which took place in the course of the "Battle of Trench" and who subsequently died in consequence of the injuries then received, decreed that the fighting men among the Bani Korayza should be put to death and the women and children should become the slaves of the Moslems. The Bani Korayza were guilty of high treason against the state during a time of siege. Nothing could be graver than their offence. The severe punishment inflicted upon them, was meant to serve as deterrent to others. In modern civilised countries, the execution of a few ring-leaders would have served the purpose but such a punishment would hardly have produced the desired effect in the time of the Prophet. "The sanguinary fate of the Korayza removed the last remnant of open opposition, political or religious, from the neighbourhood of Medina."[1]

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Life of the Prophet

CHAPTER VI

THE EXPEDITION AGAINST THE BANU MUSTALIQ, THE MARRIAGES OF THE PROPHET AND MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS 5 TO 6 A. H.

Revelation of the Koranic verse about *purdah.*

In this the fifth year of the Hegira the verse called the "hijab" or "veil" was revealed. It was indeed high time that some regulations about the dress of Moslem ladies were promulgated because in their walks abroad they were exposed to the rude remarks of the disaffected and licentious citizens. They were commanded to throw their garments loosely round them so as to partially veil their persons and ornaments. The wicked who dared to trouble the ladies were threatened with severe punishment. The verse runs thus "O Prophet, speak unto thy wives and thy daughters and the wives of the believers that they throw round them a part of their mantles. This will be more seemly that they may be recognised and may not be subject to annoyance; and God is gracious and merciful. And truly, if the disaffected and they in whose hearts is a disease, and the propagators of falsehood in the city, hold not back, we shall surely stir thee up

against them. They shall not be permitted to live near unto thee therein, but for a little. Accursed! Wherever they are found they shall be taken and killed with a great slaughter ...." Greater restrictions were imposed upon the wives of the Prophet. They were forbidden to marry again after his death. They were henceforward to be called "Umm-ul-Mumanin" or "Mothers of the Faithful."

Raid of Uyayna: 6 A.H.

Numerous expeditions were undertaken in the sixth year of the Hegira but none were on a large scale. One night in the month of Rabi I Uyayna, the chief of the Fezara tribe, with forty horsemen appeared in Al-Ghaba, a plain near Medina, killed the herdsman of the Prophet, led away all his milch camels and made the wife of the herdsman a prisoner. On receipt of the news in the morning, the Prophet at once sent a body of cavalry in pursuit of the marauders and himself started with five or six hundred men in support of the cavalry. The Moslem horsemen hung to the rear of the marauders, killed several of them and rescued half of the camels. In the confusion the captive female effected her escape. As Uyayna and his party ultimately disappeared in the desert, further pursuit was given up and the force returned to Medina, after a stay of five days.

In Jamad I, one hundred and seventy men were dispatched to intercept a rich Meccan caravan which was returning from Syria.

Interception of a rich Meccan Caravan.

The expedition was successful; the small Moslem force came upon the caravan and seized the animals with all goods including a large store of silver and captured some of the guards. Among the prisoners was Abul Aas, husband of Zainab, a daughter of the Prophet. Once before he had been taken as a captive in the battle of Badr. On that occasion his wife Zainab had sent her ornaments to Medina for his ransom. With the ornaments there had been a necklace which her mother Hadzrat Khadija had given to her. Having been much moved at the sight of the necklace which had reminded him of his beloved wife, the Prophet had pathetically appealed to the Moslems to set Abul Aas to his liberty and to return the ornaments to Zainab. The proposal having received unanimous assent, Abul Aas had been permitted to return to Mecca with the ornaments on condition of his sending Zainab to Medina. While she was being escorted to Medina by a brother of Abul Aas, a few ruffians of Mecca had overtaken the party in order to prevent the departure of Zainab. One of them having struck her camel with a javelin, she had fallen down and become extremely nervous. Her fall

had caused her miscarriage. Therefore the party had had to return to Mecca, but ere long she again left Mecca and reached Medina in safety being escorted by Zaid-bin Harith. She was therefore living in Medina when Abul Aas was for the second time taken there as a captive with the caravan of the Koreish. At night he contrived to meet his beloved wife Zainab who promised him protection. In the morning, when the Moslems assembled for prayers, she came out and cried aloud that she gave protection to Abul Aas. The protection given by any believer, man or woman, was binding. The life of Abul Aas was thus saved. At the request of the holy Prophet the captors gave him his liberty and restored to him his property. This generous act made a favourable impression upon Abul Aas, who proceeded to Mecca, settled his affairs, returned back to Medina and professed Islam. The happy couple enjoyed the company of each other for a short time only, as Hadzrat Zainab died in the following year.

Expedition against the Bani Mustaliq and the marriages of the Prophet.

In the month of Shaban, the Prophet left Medina to attack the tribe of Bani Mustaliq who were making preparations to fight with the Moslems. Even the disaffected headed by Abdullah Bin Ubby joined the expedition either

through fear of the consequences of lukewarmness or love of plunder. After a march of eight days, the Prophet surprised the enemy near the spring of Muraisi not far from Mecca and gained a signal victory. Two hundred families, two thousand camels, five thousand sheep and goats and much household goods fell into his hands, which were divided in the usual way. Among the prisoners was Juwayria daughter of the chief of the Bani Mustaliq. She fell into the share of Thabit bin Qays, who agreed to let her off on payment of a specified ransom. At her request, the Prophet paid the ransom, secured her release and then married her with her consent. His soldiers, hearing of the marriage and perceiving that the new alliance made the Prophet a relative of the Bani Mustaliq at once set at liberty the prisoners who were apportioned to them. Evidently the object of the marriage was to secure the liberation of the prisoners. I shall examine here the marriages of the Prophet. It has been seen before that at the age of 25, he married Hadzrat Khadija, who was at the time 40 years old. In spite of the disparity of age, he passed a happy domestic life with her for 25 years. She died when the age of the Prophet was about 50. The Prophet did not marry any other wife during her life time, though the custom and example of the age permitted him to take as many wives

as he liked. After her death he married Sauda, a widow of a disciple, in order to give her shelter and protection. At the earnest request of Abu-Bakr, who wanted to cement the bond of friendship by a stronger tie, the Prophet married his daughter Ayesha while she was only 7 years old. He next married Hadzrat Hafsa, a daughter of Hadzrat Omar, the greatest of all the Caliphs, because none else agreed to marry her on account of her fiery temper.

The marriage with Umm-Habiba was probably contracted to gain over, if possible, the sympathies of her father Abu Sufian a man of immense influence and an inveterate enemy of Islam. The Prophet's last wife was Maimuna, who at the time of the marriage was 51 years old. The effect of this last alliance was soon visible in the conversion of her nephew Khalid-bin-Walid a skilful general and a fierce warrior, to whom the Moslems owe many of their brilliant victories, in the infancy of Islam. In short he married eleven wives with some noble object or other. Hostile critics have found fault with the Prophet for the marriages, but properly understood they do not in any way detract from his merit. The marriages are to be judged by the social customs and conditions of the time and by the motives underlying them. Many prophets of yore possessed a numerous harem. The wise Solomon is said to have married 700

wives in addition to 300 concubines. The Arabs of the time had no limit to the number of wives they could take. In the cases of his followers the holy Prophet of Arabia not only limited the maximum number of wives to four but further enjoined that not more than one wife should be taken unless a man felt sure that he could treat all wives with equal justice This was a great step towards monogamy. It is true that the Prophet himself married eleven wives two of whom died in his lifetime; but as we have seen above, all these marriages were contracted either from philanthrophic, political or religious motives. A life of practical harmony among so many wives proves that the marriages meant pure companionship. A man who led a pure life from beginning to end, who was content with one wife up to the age of fifty, who interdicted everything that was likely to pander to passion, such as, wine, music, gambling and dancing, who would not allow men the use of gold rings and silk costumes and who inculcated and practised an austere life was the last person to marry so many wives from any motive of base passion.[1]

[1] Besides the married wives, all female slaves were lawful to an Arab. The Prophet did not interfere with the custom, because a slave girl practically acquired the status of a wife, if she bore any child; only one slave girl, *viz.*, the Coptic lady Mary, who was presented by the Christian Governor of Egypt had the honour of the company of the Prophet, to whom she presented a son named Ibrahim. To the great grief of the Prophet the child died in infancy.

CHAPTER VII

THE TREATY OF HODAYBA AND THE ENVOYS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES 6 TO 7 A. H.

It was now six years since the Prophet last saw Mecca. He naturally longed to see his native city, to visit the holy temple of Kaaba and to perform the sacred rites of pilgrimage. He thought over the matter and had a vision. He dreamt that he peacefully entered into Mecca with all his followers, made seven circuits of the Kaaba and performed all the rites of pilgrimage. When the dream was communicated to his followers, they became eager to visit the holy city. As a pilgrimage in the proper season might embroil his followers in a quarrel with one or other of the numerous tribes of Arabia who would flock to Mecca at the time, he decided to perform an Omra or lesser pilgrimage in the sacred month of Zul-kada. Accordingly he set out for Mecca with 1,500 followers in that month. Hearing the news of the Prophet's journey towards Mecca the Koreish and their allies were alarmed. They armed themselves to prevent, at any cost, his entry into the city, though the Moslems to show

the sincerity of their profession carried no arms, except sheathed swords allowable to every traveller. A body of two hundred horsemen from Mecca advanced on the road to Medina to stop the further progress of the pilgrims. The Prophet therefore turned to the right and after an arduous journey through rugged defiles reached the open place called Hodayba, on the border of the sacred territory. His camel, Al-Caswa, would not move from this place. People thought that the animal was fatigued, but the Prophet saw the hand of God in this incident. He encamped at the place and decided to yield to the wishes of the Koreish, as much as possible. The place being at a short distance from Mecca messengers moved to and fro between the city and the camp to settle the differences between the parties. Hadzrat Othman was sent to Mecca as an envoy. As there was some delay in his return, a rumour spread in the camp that he was murdered. The Prophet resolved to avenge his death. With this object he sat under the shade of an acacia tree and took from the pilgrims the pledge of faithful service even unto death. Hadzrat Othman in the meantime returned to the camp. It now appeared that the rumour was a false one. There was no occasion for an action, still the persons who took the oath earned an unique distinction for their steadfastness. The pledge

is known as Bayit-ur-Ridzwan, *i.e.*, the oath pleasing to God. At last Hadzrat Mohammed's conciliatory spirit led him to conclude a treaty with the Meccan on the most favourable terms for the latter. It was agreed that all hostility should cease for 10 years, that the Moslems and the Koreish would be at liberty to enter into alliance with other tribes, that any Koreish coming over to the Moslems without the consent of his chief or guardian should be surrendered, while a Moslem going over to the Koreish would not be returned; that the Moslems should return to Medina that year, and that they would be allowed to make pilgrimage in the coming year. This treaty is known as the "Treaty of Hodayba." Though at first sight the treaty appears humiliating to the Prophet, it was really a victory for him. It is true that any Moslem going over to the Koreish was not to be returned, but the Prophet had no fear on this score. The Moslems were staunch in their faith and would seldom desert. It gave the Prophet peace and opportunity to spread his religion and influence in other directions. The remarks of Zohri in this connection are quite appropriate. He says:—"There was no previous victory in Islam greater than this. On all other occasions there was fighting, but here war was laid aside, tranquillity and peace restored, the one party henceforward met and conversed freely with the other

and there was no man of sense or judgment amongst the idolaters who was not led thereby to join Islam and truly in the two years that followed as many persons embraced the faith as there belonged to it altogether before or even a greater number." It is therefore no wonder that the treaty was referred to as victory in a revelation which was manifested while the Prophet was returning back from Hodayba.

Envoy, to the Persian and Greek emperors inviting them to accept Islam.

On his return to Medina, Hadzrat Mohammed sent out envoys to the neighbouring countries, inviting the sovereigns and the peoples of those lands to accept Islam. "It may seem a chimerical and wild design in the Prophet of Medina,—scarcely able as he was to maintain his own position, helplessly besieged twelve months before, and forced but lately to retire from Mecca with his purpose of pilgrimage unaccomplished,—that he should dream of supremacy, either spiritual or political, over Egypt, Abyssinia, and Syria, nay over the Roman and Persian Empires."[1] But the Almighty and All-powerful Divinity revealed to him the truth, and commissioned him to spread the same. Believing in his sublime and holy mission, he was not the person to turn back from his task on account of its stupendity or supreme difficulty. He sent an

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Life of the Prophet.

envoy to Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, with the following letter:—

From Muhammad the Apostle of God to Heraclius—Peace be on him who follows truth; verily I invite you to Islam. If you accept Islam, prosperity will attend you and God will recompense you doubly; if you reject, sin will attach to you in this world and the next. You, men of the book, come to the formula, which is common to us, that "we shall not worship any one except the God, nor shall we associate aught with him, nor shall we make any of us master over others except the God." If you accept this then say "we declare that we are Moslems." Heraclius treated the envoy with respect. He is said to have even admitted the Prophetic claim of Hadzrat Mohammed. The letter sent to the Ghassanide prince Harith VII was a short one. It ran thus:—"Peace be upon him who follows truth. I request you to believe in one God, who has no partner. If you act accordingly, your country will be left in your possession." Harith VII lost his temper on reading the letter. He exclaimed, "Who dares to take my kingdom? but I shall attack him first." In due course the result of the mission was reported to the Prophet who foretold the fall of the Ghassanide kingdom.

Muckouckas, the Christian Governor of Egypt under Rome received the envoy with courtesy

and sent a present of two beautiful Coptic damsels, a garment and a mule. One of these damsels was Mary, by whom the Prophet got a son named Ibrahim. The child died in his infancy to the great grief of the parents. On receipt of the letter of the Prophet, Najashi or Negus, the Christian King of Abyssinia, is said by some authorities[1] to have professed Islam. He had gained some knowledge of the doctrines and practices of Islam from the Moslem exiles living in his country. It is therefore no wonder that the religion which attracted idolatrous Arabs inspite of severe persecutions might have impressed him favourably, if not altogether weaned him from the degraded form of Christianity then prevalent. The Christian chief of the Bani Hanifa inhabiting in Yama expressed his willingness to come over to the fold of Islam, provided he were given a share in the rule. When the Prophet read his answer, he said "Had this man stipulated for an unripe date only as his share in the land, I would not have consented. Let him perish and his vain glory with him." These missions were sent by the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh Hegira. Though the idea of sending the missions appeared chimerical in the beginning, the result was favourable on the

[1] Ibn Ishaq says that Najashy professed Islam but Waqadi contradicts the statement.

whole. About this time the Prophet also sent a letter to Chosroes, the Emperor of the Persians, requesting him to profess Islam. The purport of the letter was almost similar to the one sent to Heraclius. This epistle couched in terms of equality, from the Prophet to the proud monarch of vast dominions excited intense rage on his part. He spoke disrespectfully of the Prophet and tore the letter to pieces. He asked Bazan, his Governor of Yemen, to arrest the Prophet and send him to Persia. Bazan sent two messengers to the Prophet requesting him to appear before Chosroes. The Prophet had learnt by inspiration that Chosroes had been killed by his son, who sat on the throne. He gave the news to the messengers and dismissed them with the request that Bazan should profess Islam. The news turned out true, so Bazan and the Persians living in Yemen adopted Islam.

When the Prophet heard of the misconduct of Chosroes, he observed that his empire would be torn into pieces like the letter. The prophesy was literally fulfilled within a short period.

CHAPTER VIII

The Conquest of Khaiber and the Battle of Muta and other Events; 7-8 A.H.

Subjugation of the Jews of Khaiber, 7 A. H.

Some Jewish tribes possessed several fortresses at the distance of about 100 miles to the north of Medina. This country was called Khaiber, meaning a fortified place. As these Jews tried to form another coalition against the Moslems, the Prophet led an army of about 1,400 men and 200 cavalry against Khaiber and inspite of a brave front presented by the Jews, fortress after fortress was reduced in 7 A. H. When the most impregnable fortress of Al-Qamus fell into the hands of the Moslems, on account of an impetuous general assault led by Hadzrat Aly, the Jews sued for peace. Their fertile lands and immovable properties were given to them on condition of their paying half of the produce of the lands in lieu of the protection they were to enjoy. The moveable properties of the tribes who had been conquered in battle were seized in accordance with the terms of peace and distributed among the soldiers. The plunder of Khaiber was far greater than

that of any previous expedition. Vast stores of date, oil, honey and barley, numerous flocks of sheep and herds of camels and vast quantities of treasure and jewellery formed the rich booty. This was divided in the usual way. The lands were distributed on a different principle. Half of them was set apart for the Prophet as crown land and the other half was divided amongst the soldiers, who got the half share of the produce of these lands.

Here a Jewess named Zainab, who had lost her husband, father, brother and other relatives in the battle, cooked a lamb, steeped it in deadly poison and placed it with sweet words before the Prophet at the time of the evening meal. Scarcely had he eaten the first mouthful, than he cried out that the food was poisoned and spat out what was in his mouth. Thus the life of the Prophet was saved but he felt the evil effects of the poison even to his dying day. One of his companions died in consequence of the poison. When Zainab was questioned about her crime she boldly confessed her guilt. She was therefore condemned to death. Being awe-stricken by the fate of Khaiber, the Jews of the neighbouring town of Fadak surrendered on the same terms. As it fell into the hands of the Prophet, without any battle it remained in his possession under divine command. On the return journey, Wadi-ul-Qora was conquered by

the sword and the plunder was distributed among the soldiers. The authority of the Prophet was thus established over all the Jewish tribes north of Medina. In this campaign some special ordinances were promulgated. The flesh of the domestic ass and all carnivorous animals were forbidden. About this time Jaafar, brother of Hadzrat Aly, returned from Abyssinia with the remaining exiles. This event gave the Prophet as much pleasure as the conquest of Khaiber.

Omratul Qadza or the "fulfilled Pilgrimage"

By the end of this year the Prophet according to the terms of the Treaty of Hodayba started with 2,000 disciples on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Koreish left Mecca for three days, so that they might not have to meet the Moslems. They retreated to the summit of the surrounding hills from whence they watched the approach of the cavalcade in a long train, headed by the Prophet on his favourite camel, Al-Caswa. During the three days, the Prophet and his disciples performed the rites of pilgrimage and behaved most orderly. On this occasion, the Prophet married Maymuna, an aged widow of 51 years. She was a sister of Khalid bin Walid's mother. Shortly after the marriage Khalid proceeded to Medina and professed Islam. He was a famous warrior noted alike for his skill and ferocity. It was he who had turned the first

successes of the Moslems at Ohod into a disaster for them. The conquest of Iraq and Syria were mainly due to his skill and valour. On account of his rare military genius, he received the surname of "Saifullah" or the Sword of God. "Two other illustrious persons followed suit. One was Amru-binul-Aas, an astute politician who was sent by the Koreish as their envoy to Abyssinia. The other was Othman-bin-Talah, the custodian of the Kaaba. They were probably gained over "by the earnest devotion of Mohamet to the national shrine and the elevation and beauty of the services he there performed. The position of Mahomet at Mecca was greatly strengthened by the accession of such leading men. The balance was already wavering, it required little to throw it entirely on the side of Islam."[1] Thus it was that the Koreish in a body gave in their adhesion to Islam, when Mecca was invaded two years later.

The battle of Muta, 8 A.H.

In the eighth year of the Hegira, the Prophet sent an expedition of 3,000 men under the command of Zaid bin Harith against the chief of Muta to seek reparation for the murder of a Moslem envoy. Heraclius was ready to meet this force with a huge army composed of Romans and Arab Christians. It is said that he had with him one

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's *Life of the Prophet.*

hundred thousand Romans and an equal number of Arab Christians. The Moslems naturally hesitated to face the Roman army so vastly superior to them in number and discussed the propriety of a retreat. Abdullah bin Rawaha, addressing the Moslems, said that they fought on the strength of their faith and not number and that they had left their homes to meet death in the cause of truth. These noble words uttered by the intrepid Abdullah inspired marvellous enthusiasm among the handful of Moslem force. They took up a well chosen position at Muta, where they awaited the attack of the Romans who came down upon the small band of Moslems with all the weight of their number. Zaid bin Harith, the Moslem commander fought with incredible courage and met a glorious death. Jaafar, brother of Aly, who succeeded him in office, took up the standard and fought heroically. When his right hand was cut off by the enemy, he held the standard with his left hand and continued the struggle. Unfortunately he lost his left hand also ; then Abdullah bin Rawaha assumed the command but he too was killed in his turn. At last Khalid bin Walid was elected to the command. By ingenious and rapid movements, he saved his little army from utter destruction and retraced his steps to Medina "As he drew near to the city, the people who came out to meet the returning army reproachfully cast

dust at them and cried out "Ah ye runaways! Do you indeed flee before the enemy when fighting for the Lord?" But Mahomet reassured the downcast troops by saying :— "Nay they are not runaways; but they are men who will yet return unto the battle, if the Lord will."[1] The Prophet was exceedingly grieved to hear of the death of his cousin Jaafar and his friend Zaid bin Harith. He shed tears and said, "God has bestowed two wings to Jaafar who is now flying in heaven." For this reason Hadzrat Jaafar is surnamed Tayar or the Flier.

Expedition against the Bani Qodzaa under the command of Amru-binul Aas.

On account of the repulse at Muta, the prestige of the Prophet waned in the borders of Syria. The Bani Qodzaa assembled a large force and contemplated an attack upon Medina. To nip the danger in the bud, Amru-binul-Aas, the astute politician, who wielded some influence over a branch of that tribe, was sent with a force of three hundred men to subjugate the tribes in that region. After a march of ten days, he encamped near the Syrian frontier and asked for a reinforcement as the enemy had assembled a large force. Abu Obayda binul Jarrah came up with two hundred men among whom were

[1] Ibn Khuldun says that Khalid fought with prodigious valour and pressed back the Romans, but the story does not appear probable. I have therefore adopted the version of Sir William Muir, who has taken it from the secretary of Waqadi.

Omar and Abu Bakr. Abu Obayda claimed the command of the army, but Amru, a tenacious man would not yield urging that he was the real commander, while Abu Obayda merely brought a reinforcement. To avoid discussion Abu Obayda, a man of mild temper yielded and Amru remained in command. At the approach of the Moslem army, the enemy dispersed and Amru easily gained the allegiance of some branches of the Qodzaa tribe.

Martyrdom of Farwa.

About this time Farwa, an Arab Christian of of the Bani Juzam, was the Roman Governor of Amman. Being impressed by the truth, beauty and simplicity of the new faith, he professed Islam and sent valuable presents to the Prophet. The Roman government tried to seduce him back from the new faith by hopes of promotion but to no effect. He was therefore put to death but he preferred death to apostacy.

CHAPTER IX

Three Great Events—the Conquest of Mecca, the Battle of Hunayn and the Siege of Tayif, 8 A.H.

The conquest of Mecca. 8 A. H. 630 A. D.

In the month of Shaban of the eighth year of the Hegira, the Bani Bakr, with a party of the Koreish in disguise, attacked at night an encampment of the Bani Khozaa on account of old enmity. The marauding party massacred several men of the Khozaa tribe who were in alliance with the Moslems. A deputation of the Bani Khozaa waited upon the Prophet and represented to him their grievances. He earnestly promised them help and exclaimed "If I assist you not with the same aid as if the cause were mine own, then let me never more be assisted by the Lord." He at once took steps to raise a large army but in order to divert the attention of men from his real object, he sent a small expedition in another direction. On the 10th of Ramadzan he started with an army of 10,000 strong. It was the largest of all the forces that ever before assembled round his standard. On the road to Mecca, he gave out his intention, but

commanded his men to take special care that the news may not reach Mecca. Evidently this precaution was adopted in order to take the Meccans by surprise, so that the loss of lives on either side might be the least possible. In the way he met his uncle Hadzrat Abbas, who was bound for Medina. His goods were sent to their destination, but he himself joined the army of the Prophet. After a march of eight days the army encamped at Marr al Tzahran. To cow down the Meccan to submission by a show of force, the Prophet instructed his men to light fires on the tops of the surrounding hills. At once 10,000 lights blazed forth presenting a grand and impressive scene. The Meccans heard vague rumour of a contemplated attack upon their city but had no definite information. Abu Sufian bin Harb with Hakim, the nephew of Khadija who had shown kindness to the Prophet when blockaded in the Sheb of Abu Talib and another person, went out for purposes of scouting. They fell in with Abbas, who came out of the camp to advise the Meccans, if he could by chance meet any of them, about the futility of resistance. He pointed out the myriads of light, which the army of the Prophet kindled on the mountain tops and counselled Abu Sufian to profess Islam and pray for mercy. He then led him to the tent of the Prophet. Here Omar asked

his permission to put the prisoner to death as he was an arch enemy of Islam, but Abbas replied that he gave protection to Abu Sufian. The Prophet ordered that Abu Sufian should be lodged in the tent of Abbas for the night. In the next morning Abu Sufian, when produced before the Prophet, thought it prudent to profess Islam. He was therefore allowed to depart and authorised to proclaim to the citizens that all persons taking shelter in the Kaaba, or in the house of Abu Sufian or in their own houses with closed doors would not be molested. Abu Sufian hurried back to Mecca. As he entered into the city, he cried out at the top of his voice "Ye Koreish! Mohammed is close upon us. He hath an army which ye are not able to withstand. Whoever entereth the house of Abu Sufian shall be safe; and whoever shutteth his door upon him shall be safe; and whoever entereth the Holy House shall be safe." On hearing the news, the citizens hastened to their homes and to the Kaaba. In the meantime the army of the Prophet entered into the valley of Zi Tawa near Mecca. No signs of the enemy were visible. If the Koreish had intended to oppose the invading force they would have taken up their stand at the entrance to this valley. It was therefore apparent that the precautions taken by the Prophet to overawe the Koreish had the desired

effect. He was pleased at the prospect of peaceful entry and bowed to God in token of thanksgiving. The army was split up into four divisions. One division under Zobeir was to enter upper Mecca by the North ; the Bedouins led by Khalid were to occupy lower Mecca by the south ; the Ansars under the command of Saad-bin-Obada were to make their way into the western quarter and the Refugees commanded by Abu Obayda were to accompany the Prophet by the nearest road. All the commanders were strictly forbidden to use force. In the march, Saad bin Obada sang vindictive martial songs. He was therefore relieved of his command which was given to his son Qays. All the divisions except that of Khalid entered the city peacefully. Safwan and Ikrima bin Abu Jahl and the bitterest enemies of the Prophet assembled in lower Mecca either to offer resistance or make good their escape. They came into collision with the fiery Khalid, who put them to rout killing about twenty-eight persons. He himself lost only two men. The Prophet thus entered the city as a victor, which now lay at his mercy. He showed a rare moderation and humanity in dealing with the citizens. Amnesty was granted to all except twelve persons, who were proscribed. But only four of these twelve persons were actually put to the sword. Among the four slain were two

renegade Moslems and a singing girl who was in the habit of abusing Islam and the Prophet. The fourth person was Hubbar the man who had caused miscarriage to the Prophet's daughter Zainab by attacking her camel. One of the proscribed persons was Abdullah bin Saad bin Abi Sarh. He had been employed by the Prophet in the sacred and honourable duty of writing the verses of the Koran from dictation. But he had abused the trust and recorded the verses wrongly. When his misdeed had come to the knowledge of the Prophet, he had escaped to Mecca. On the conquest of Mecca, he took the shelter of his foster-brother, Hadzrat Othman, who produced him before the Prophet and prayed for mercy. Loath to pardon a miscreant of the type, the Prophet remained silent for sometime but granted him quarter in the end. In later years he became notorious as Governor of Egypt. Though the Prophet showed extraordinary mercy in dealing with the citizens he was relentless to the idols of the nation. All the portraits and images in the Kaaba were destroyed under his orders. When the image of Habal, the tutelary deity of Mecca, fell down with a crash, the Prophet exclaimed "Truth hath come and falsehood hath vanished; for falsehood is evanescent." In spite of his zeal, he did not force his religion upon the people, for a man of his wisdom and piety could not but recognise that

compulsion had no place in the matter of faith. The beauty and truth of the faith and the successes of the Prophet now attracted many citizens to his cause; these persons came forward and voluntarily professed Islam. The Prophet next turned his attention to the tribes living in the vicinity. Small detachments were sent to demolish the temples of their idols and to invite them to Islam, but the Moslem lieutenants were instructed to observe peace and goodwill and not to use force. Khalid bin Walid was sent to the Bani Jozayma. This famous warrior had a grudge against the tribe, because in the past they had murdered his father and plundered his property. Fearing injury from Khalid they came armed, but declared that they professed Islam and were loyal to the Prophet. They even surrendered their arms on the order of Khalid, but he was not satisfied. He made them prisoners and gave one captive to each of his soldiers. On the next day he ordered his men to kill their respective captives. The Refugees and the Auxiliaries refused to carry this unjust order but the men of the Bani Sulaym beheaded their prisoners. The Prophet was very much displeased with Khalid for this cold-blooded massacre. He sent Hadzrat Aly to give liberal compensation to the tribe for the loss they had sustained in men and property. Khalid remained in disgrace for a time.

The battle of Hunayn in Shawwal of 8 A. H.

After a stay of about a fortnight, the Prophet had to set out from Mecca to repel a threatened danger. Alarmed at the conquests of the Prophet and jealous of his successes, the powerful tribes of the Bani Hawazin and the Thaqif of Tayif began to assemble in the valley of Autas, between Mecca and Tayif with a view to attack the Moslems. Leaving the administration of Mecca, in the hands of Attab, a youthful but influential chief of the house of Abd Shams, the Prophet marched out of Mecca with his army which now swelled to 12,000 units by the addition of the men of Mecca. Safwan, a Meccan chief, lent to the Prophet 100 suits of mail and the same number of camels. In three or four marches, the Moslem army reached the entrance to the valley of Hunayn. The hostile tribes under the leadership of a chief named Malik bin Auf advanced to that place and concealed themselves on both sides of the narrow and steep defile which formed the entrance to the valley. On the advice of Malik, his men brought with them their families and properties so that they might fight desperately for the sake of their dear ones. Very early in the morning, the Moslem army resumed its march. The Prophet clad in armour and mounted on his white mule Duldul was towards the rear of the army. As Khalid leading the vanguard

was defiling into the valley, the enemy suddenly sprang upon the Moslem soldiers, breaking their ranks and throwing them into disorder. The shock was communicated from column to column till the whole army, seized with panic, began to retreat in disorder. The Prophet called out his men to return but in vain. Hadzrat Abbas, at the instance of the Prophet cried out with his stentorian voice, "O! Ye citizens of Medina; O Ye men of the Tree of Fealty." The voice reached far and wide. About one hundred men disentangled themselves from the crowd and assembled round the Prophet. By this time the enemy fought their way to that place. The Prophet led the heroic band with the cry of "Allaho Akbar" (God is great). They attacked the enemy with the ferocity of lions and checked their progress. The Moslem army recovered from the panic returned to duty with enthusiasm and joined their comrades. A life and death struggle ensued and continued long. At last the Hawazin and their allies were routed. The Moslems pursued the retreating enemy and caused havoc among them. Malik bin Auf with the flower of his army took his stand on an eminence at the other end of the valley to cover the retreat of his broken army but he could not save the women, the children and the properties. Six thousand prisoners, twenty-four thousand camels, forty thousand sheep and goats and four

thousand ounces of silver fell into the hands of the Moslems. Malik with some of his men fled to Tayif and the remnant of the hostile army hastily retreated to Autas pursued by the Moslem cavalry. A detachment of the Moslem army defeated the Hawazins, who rallied in Autas and inflicted severe loss on them. The Hawazins now dispersed and found shelter in the surrounding hills.

Siege of Tayif 8 A. H.

Sending the spoils of war to Jierrana for safe custody, the Prophet with his army marched on Tayif and laid siege to that city which was protected by strong walls and battlements. The Tayifites made a spirited defence. They discharged well-sustained showers of arrows on the Moslem camp inflicting some loss. Twelve men were killed and good many were wounded among whom was Abdullah bin Abu Bakr. It was soon found that the camp was too near the city and hence it was removed outside the range of the arrows. A tent was pitched for Hadzrat Omm Salma and another for Hadzrat Zainab, the two wives of the Prophet who accompanied him in this campaign. Between these two tents, the Prophet conducted the daily prayers. There the great Mosque of Tayif was erected at a later period. As the siege made no impression upon the city, the assistance of a tribe acquainted with the use of the testudo and catapult was procured

and these machines were prepared for the protection of the soldiers and for the discharge of stones on the battlements of the city. But the Tayifites were equal to the occasion. They threw heated iron balls on the machines, setting them on fire. As there was no other alternative to reduce the city, the Prophet ordered the destruction of the famous vineyards and fruit bearing trees which surround it. The Tayifites sent a piteous appeal to the Prophet to save their gardens. His generous heart was moved and the order was countermanded. The siege now lasted about 20 days, without any success. The Moslem army was getting impatient. The Prophet therefore sought the advice of his principal companions. They were in favour of a withdrawal. A man of experience said of the enemy "A fox in its hole. Remain long enough and you will catch it; leave it alone and it will not harm you." It was felt that time and circumstances would bring them round to the faith. The siege was accordingly raised and the Prophet marched back to Jierrana, where were the spoils of war.

Among the prisoners taken at Hunayn was an aged woman whom the Prophet recognised as the little girl who had tended him when he had been among the Bani Saad in charge of his nurse Halima. She was his foster-sister.

He treated her with kindness and gave her freedom. Encouraged by this act of kindness, the various tribes of the Hawazin sent a deputation to the Prophet accepting his authority and praying for favourable treatment. He set at liberty the prisoners that fell in his share. The men of Mecca and Medina followed the noble example with commendable alacrity. A few tribes declined to part with their prisoners, but the Prophet liberated them also promising to compensate their owners from the first booty that might fall into the hands of the Moslems. Fearful that they might be deprived of the booty, some of his followers became impertinent and clamoured for its division. They were appeased by a promise of distribution of the booty, which was soon apportioned among the soldiers, but out of his own royal fifth, the Prophet made princely presents to the chief men among the Koreish and the Bedouins to gain over their hearts. Abu Sufian, his sons Yazid and Muaviya, Safwan, Oyayna and others, who but a few weeks before were deadly enemies, received one hundred camels each. Lesser chiefs also got appropriate presents, but the old and faithful followers of Medina were neglected. A murmur of discontent prevailed among them. When the complaint reached the ears of the Prophet, he assembled them and said, " Why are ye disturbed in mind because of the things of this life,

wherewith I have sought to incline the hearts of these men unto Islam, whereas ye are already steadfast in your faith? Are ye not satisfied that the others should obtain the flocks and the camels, while ye carry back the Prophet of the Lord unto your home. No, I will not leave you for ever. If all mankind went one way and the men of Medina another way, verily I would go the way of the men of Medina. The Lord be favourable unto them, and bless them, and their sons and and their sons' sons for ever!" The Refugees were moved by these words. They wept and cried in one voice, "Yea, we are well satisfied, O Prophet, with our lot." After performing the lesser pilgrimage at Mecca, the Prophet returned to Medina.

CHAPTER X

Deputations from Various Tribes and the Spread of Islam.

The conversion of the Koreish to the new faith was a death-blow to idolatry in Arabia. The various tribes residing in the Peninsula now realised their weakness and their folly. Therefore "the mosque of Mahomet began this year to be the scene of frequent embassies from all quarters of Arabia. His supremacy was everywhere recognised, and from the most distant parts of the Peninsula,—from Yemen and Hadhramaut, from Mahra, Oman, and Bahrein, from the borders of Syria and the outskirts of Persia, the tribes hastened to prostrate themselves before the rising potentate and by an early submission to secure his favour. They were treated with uniform courtesy and consideration; their representations were received in public in the court of the Mosque, which formed the hall of audience; and there all matters requiring the commands of Mahomet,—the collection of tithes and tribute, the grant of lands, recognition or conferment of authority

Deputations from various tribes in the 9th year of the Hegira.

and office, adjustment of *international disputes*, were discussed and settled. Simple though its exterior was, and unpretending its forms and usages, more real power was wielded and affairs of greater importance transacted in the court-yard of the Mosque of Mahomet than in many an imperial palace."[1] On account of the commencement of the deputations in the ninth year of the Hegira the year is styled, "The Year of Deputations."

Embassy from the Bani Tamim.

Among the embassies was one from the Bani Tamim. Eighty or ninety representatives of the tribe came to the Prophet to beg for the release of their men, women and children, over fifty in number, who had been taken as prisoners by the Moslems in a punitive raid. When they met the Prophet in the mosque, they desired to compete with his followers in poetry and oratory. An orator of the tribe rose first. He depicted in a boastful style the strength and nobility of his tribe. On a sign from the Prophet Thabit bin Qays painted in a beautiful style the glory of the Prophet and the devotion of the Ansars and Refugees, and ended by holding out a threat to those who would not profess Islam. Next a Bedouin bard stood up and recited in poetry the greatness and hospitality of

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Life of the Prophet.

his tribe. Hassan bin Thabit replied in sonorous and sublime verse and ended thus :—

"Children of Darim! contend not with us; your boasting will turn to your shame;

"Ye lie when ye contend with us for glory.

"What are ye but our servants, our nurses and our attendants?

"If ye be come to save your lives, and your property, that it may not be distributed as booty;

"Then make not unto God any equal, embrace Islam and abandon the wild manners of the Heathen."

The Bani Tamims had the candour to admire the beauty and force of the poetry. They exclaimed, "By Lord! how rich is this man's fortune! His poet as well as his orator surpasseth ours in eloquence." They gave in their adhesion and all the branches of the tribe professed Islam and the Prophet liberated their prisoners and gave them rich presents and provision for the journey.

The Prophet sent a small detachment under Hadzrat Aly for the subjugation of Tay. Adi, son of Hatim, the Chief of Tay, fled, but Hadzrat Aly brought his sister Sufana and several others as captives. On account of the proverbial charity of her deceased father, the Prophet set her and her people at liberty. Being struck by this act of singular kindness, Adi who like his father was a Christian came to Medina and became a Moslem. On returning

Conversion of Adi, a son of Hatim Tay.

to his people he persuaded them to profess the new faith.

Conversion of Kaab bin Zobeyr 9. A H.

In the beginning of the ninth year of the Hegira, Kaab bin Zobeyr, a famous poet, professed Islam. He had been an inveterate enemy of the faith. He had published false stories respecting the Prophet and incited the infidels against the Moslems. On the conquest of Mecca his head had therefore been proscribed. A brother of his had communicated the news to him and advised him either to embrace Islam or to leave the country. Kaab had decided to adopt the new faith. One day he came to the Prophet and inquired whether he would pardon Kaab if he were to become a Moslem. On receipt of an affirmative reply Kaab said that he was Kaab and a Moslem to boot. He then recited an exquisitely beautiful poem in praise of the Prophet, who being pleased with the poet bestowed on him his own mantle. Hence the poem is known as Kasidatul-Barda or the Poem of the Mantle. The garment came to be regarded so sacred that Amir Muàviya purchased it from the heirs of Kaab for 40,000 dirhems. The verse that pleased the Prophet most runs thus:—

Verily, the Prophet is a Light illuminating the world,
A naked sword from the armoury of God.

CHAPTER XI

The Expedition to Tabuk and the Conversion of the Tayifites; 9 A. H.

The expedition to Tabuk; 9 A.H.

In the summer of this year strong rumours of warlike preparations on a large scale, by Heraclius and the Roman feudatory tribes for the invasion of Arabia reached Medina. On strategical grounds, the Prophet decided to take the offensive and repel the threatened danger. On account of the heat of the season, the distance of the journey and the magnitude of the undertaking and other difficulties, he gave out his intentions beforehand and asked his adherents and allies to make the necessary preparations. Though the disaffected dissuaded several persons from joining the army, the enthusiasm of the Moslems in general was great. The house of a Jew the rendezvous of the disaffected was burnt down under orders. Every true believer contributed his mite for the expenses of the expedition. Hadzrat Othman with his usual generosity contributed the largest sum. A few persons who could not procure any riding animal were rejected. They wept bitterly when

returning home. A wealthy Moslem took pity on them and provided them with animals. Thus the largest army (twenty thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry) that ever before assembled in Arabia set out with the Prophet. After a few marches Abdullah bin Ubby with some of his followers returned to Medina. Experiencing great hardship in the march, on account of drought and heat the army at last reached Tabuk (near Damascus), where was plenty of shade and water. No signs of the enemy were visible. It further transpired that Heraclius was too busy with other works to think of an invasion. The Prophet halted here for twenty days and received the adhesion of the Christian and Jewish tribes in the neighbourhood. John, the Christian Prince of Ayla or Acaba, with a cross of gold on his forehead appeared before the Prophet in response to a command and bowed reverentially. The Prophet received him with courtesy and kindness and requested Bilal to entertain the guest with hospitality. On his agreeing to pay a tribute of three hundred dinars, the Prophet granted him and his men certain privileges. Khalid bin Walid was sent with a strong detachment of cavalry to Duma, but the Prophet with the main army returned to Medina. On his arrival to the city, the Prophet learnt that a new mosque at Qoba was built with the object of

sowing dissension among the Moslems and drawing off men from the old mosque there. It was also to give shelter to the disaffected persons. The Prophet therefore ordered the demolition of the mosque, which was condemned in a few verses of the 9th sura of the holy Koran.

Khalid marched rapidly across the desert, surprised Okaydar the Christian chief of Duma, made him a captive and exacted a ransom of two thousand camels, eight thousand sheep and four hundred suits of mail with stands. He brought the prisoner and the booty to Medina. The simple citizens gazed with admiration at the golden cross and the velvet raiment of Okaydar. The superior attractions of the new religion proved too strong for his faith in Christianity. He adopted Islam and was recognised as a Moslem ally.

Martyrdom of Orwa and the conversion of the Tayifites.

Orwa, one of the chiefs of Tayif, had been learning the use of military engines in Yemen, when his city had been besieged by the army of the Prophet. On his return home he found that the Koreish and the neighbouring tribes had adopted Islam while Tayif alone had held aloof. He had already been favourably impressed with the virtues of the Prophet and the excellences of Islam, when he had acted as an envoy of the Koreish in the concluding treaty of Hodayba. The example of

Mecca and of the neighbouring tribes now decidedly gained him over to the new religion. He proceeded to Medina, embraced Islam, and asked for permission to invite his fellow citizens to share in the blessings conferred by that faith. As the Prophet was very well aware of the bigotry of the Tayifites, he repeatedly forbade Orwa to desist from his object but the latter persisted in pursuing the noble but imprudent course, because he had some confidence in his own popularity. One evening Orwa reached his native city and invited his fellow citizens to Islam. They took time to consider the matter. In the next morning, when Orwa, at the top of his voice, was crying out the prayer call from the terrace of his house, a rabble gathered there, shot arrows at him and wounded him fatally. In his dying breath, Orwa praised the Almighty God for giving him the honour of martyrdom and desired to be buried by the side of the martyrs of Hunayn. Fearing vengeance, the Tayifites sent a deputation to the Prophet accepting Islam and asking for general pardon, exemption from the daily prayers and three years' time for the destruction of their idols. The pardon was granted but the other requests were rejected on religious grounds. Mughira, a nephew of Orwa, who had escaped to Medina after the martyrdom of the latter, was deputed with Abu Sufian for the demolition of the idols.

Mughira hewed down the image of the great idol Lat amid the lamentations and cries of the women. The debts of Orwa were paid off from the jewels and other spoils of the temple.

Pilgrimage conducted by Hadzrat Abu Bakr and the revelation of some verses of Sura-i-Barat.

The season of the annual pilgrimage was now drawing nigh. The Prophet did not hitherto join the ancient ceremony, because the large number of heathens, who would assemble on the occasion, would mix many unholy acts with the sacred rites; as for instance they used to make seven circuits round the Kaaba with entirely naked body. The Prophet must have been thinking over the matter, when the first thirty or forty verses of the 9th Sura or Chapter of the Koran named Barat or "Liberty," because it absolved the Prophet from certain obligations towards the heathen Arabs, were revealed. He sent Hadzrat Abu Bakr at the head of three hundred Moslems to teach them the proper rites of the pilgrimage and to proclaim to the heathens the newly revealed verses.[1] The order was soon modified and Hadzrat Aly was sent to recite the verses because it was thought proper that some one of the family of the Prophet should read out the Koranic verses. Hadzrat Abu Bakr however

[1] Some historians say that the Sura-i-Barat was revealed after th departure of Hadzrat Abu Bakr.

continued to be the leader of the pilgrims. Hadzrat Ali read aloud the verses at Mina and among other things he forbade all idolaters to perform the pilgrimage in future years, and to make the circuit of the Kaaba with naked body.

Hajjatul Vedaa or the Farewell Pilgrimage.

In the tenth year of the Hegira the Prophet sent a mission under Khalid to some tribes of Najran and another under Hadzrat Aly to a few tribes of Yemen for securing their adhesion to Islam. Both these missions became successful. Towards the end of this year the Prophet started on pilgrimage to Mecca with a very large following. The number of his followers on this occasion has variously been computed from 90,000 to 170,000. He felt that his mission was fulfilled and his end was drawing nigh, so he took this opportunity of delivering a sublime sermon from the top of mount Arafat to the vast concourse of Moslems who assembled there. Parts of the sermon are quoted below.

"Ye people! listen to my words for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you at this place."

"Your lives and your property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another, until ye appear before the Lord, as this day and this month are sacred for all; and (remember) ye shall have to appear before your Lord, who shall demand from

you an account of all your action...........Ye people, ye have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you.............. Treat your wives with kindness and love. Verily ye have taken them on the security of God and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God." "Keep always faithful to the trust reposed in you and avoid sins. Usury is forbidden. The debtor shall return only the principal and the beginning will be made with the loans of my uncle Abbas. Henceforth the vengeance of blood practised in the days of Ignorance is prohibited and all blood-feud abolished commencing with the murder of my cousin Rabia son of Harith."

"And your slaves! see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear; and if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then sell them for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be harshly treated."

"Ye people! listen to my words and understand the same. Know that the Moslems are brothers unto one another. Ye are one brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother unless freely given out of good will. Guard yourself from committing injustice." "Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent. Haply he that shall be told may remember better than he who hath heard it."

In continuation of the sermon he quoted the verses of the Koran abolishing the triennial intercalation of a month into the year and fixing the month of the pilgrimage according to the cycle of the lunar year. In conclusion he observed "Verily I have fulfilled my mission. I have left that amongst you, a plain command,—the Book of God and manifest ordinances,—which if ye hold fast, ye shall never go astray." The audience cried out, "Yea verily thou hast fulfilled your mission." After performing the remaining rites of the pilgrimage the Prophet came back to Medina.

Organisation of the Provinces and the rise of three pretenders; 11 A. H.

In 11 A. H. Hadzrat Mohammed busied himself in organising the various provinces. Officers were sent to the various tribes to teach the principles of religion, administer justice and collect the tithes. In this year preparations were also made to send an expedition against Syria under the youthful Osama, son of Zaid, to wipe out the memory of the disaster at Muta, but on account of the illness of the holy Prophet, the expedition was suspended for the time being. The army which assembled in Jorf, about three miles from Medina, dispersed. The poison given to the Prophet in Khaiber by a Jewess named Zainab had slowly told upon his health and it now became patent that his end was drawing nigh.

The appearance of three pretenders.

The success of Hadzrat Muhammed raised three pretenders who claimed to be Prophets. Ayhala-ibn Kaab nick-named Al Aswad (the Black) was the first to take up arms agains him. He was a chief of Yemen, an orator and a clever conjuror. By his tricks and eloquence he made his simple tribesmen believe that he had divine powers. He soon acquired a large following and gained over the Bani Mazhij and the inhabitants of Najran who turned out Khalid bin Saaid, the representative of the Prophet. He killed Shahr son of Bazan the Moslem Governor of Sanaa and forcibly married his wife, Azad, who detested him to the bottom of her heart. Ultimately her cousin Firuz with her help and that of another man murdered Aswad. Thus Najran and Sanaa (parts of Yemen) became free from renegades. Tulayha son of Khuwaylid and Museylama were the two other pretenders who were suppressed in the Caliphate of Hadzrat Abu Bakr.

CHAPTER XII.

THE KORAN AND ITS TEACHINGS.

Different names of the Koran and its divisions.

As a life of the Prophet would be incomplete without an account of the Koran, a brief review of the book is given here. The word "Koran" which means "reciting" or "reading" is the name given to the divine book which was from time to time revealed to the holy Prophet, within a period of about 23 years. The Koran is also called Al-Furqan or the "Distinguisher" and Al-Mushaf or the "Volume" and Al-Kitab or "the Book." It consists of 114 suras or chapters with 6,237 ayats (literally signs or wonders), that is, verses. According to different punctuations, the number of verses varies to a small extent but the total number of words in the book is always the same. The chapters are not all of the same length. Sura "Bakr" or "the Cow" consisting of 286 verses, is the longest chapter, the smallest suras such as Al-Kowther or the Abundance consists of 3 verses. Generally speaking a chapter has been named after some prominent word in it; for instance Sura "Bakr" has been so styled because the

word "baqr" appears in this chapter in connection with the sacrifice of a cow enjoined under divine orders by Moses to his people. As a rule the longer chapters, do not deal with any particular subject but several subjects or matters have been introduced into them. In Sura "Baqr" the rules about pilgrimage, fasting, divorce, alms, jehad or religious warfare, lawful food and prayers, besides definition of true religion, the attributes of God, allusion to the prophets of old and their wars and many other subjects have been included. These longer suras or chapters were not revealed at one and the same time. The Prophet himself gave out the titles of the different chapters and indicated what verses were to form part of what chapters. Besides the above division into suras or chapters, the Koran has been divided for the sake of convenience in reading and reciting into thirty equal "paras" or parts. With the same object the "paras" have again been sub-divided into "rukus." The "paras" consist of 14 to 22 rukus, except the last "para" which consists of 39 rukus.

How the Koran has been preserved.

The verses of the holy book were written on palm leaves, shoulder blades, skins and stones as soon as they were revealed. These records were stored in a big box. The verses were also committed to memory by hundreds of men. After a year of the Prophet's death the Koran was written in

the form of a book from the above materials. About 20 years afterwards slight variations were corrected and a standard edition was published by Hadzrat Othman, the third Caliph. The various editions of the holy book, now to be found are but verbatim copies of the aforesaid standard book. There is thus absolute accuracy about the correctness of the divine book. At the present moment, it exists in the same form in which it was recited by the holy Prophet thirteen centuries ago. No other holy book can claim the same degree of accuracy.

A review of the Koran.

The language of the Koran is chaste, concise and rhythmical bordering on poetry. It is comprehensible to all persons in commensuration with their intellectual and spiritual progress. The physical pleasures of heaven and the pains of hell depicted in the book appeal powerfully to simple and uncultured Arabs. But to some of the sufis the stories are mere allegorical representation of spiritual pleasures and pains, which are none the less as real as physical feelings. Many of the passages of the holy book are thus to be interpreted in a figurative sense and not in the literal sense. Again a general meaning is to be attached to several passages, though the text refers to specific matters. Thus explained the Koran appears to be the divine and sublime book, which it is. European writers

have generally commented adversely and disrespectfully on the holy book. Even Carlyle in spite of his appreciation of the noble life of the Prophet has, through ignorance of Arabic used blasphemous expressions about the sacred book. The erroneous criticism of those writers is due to a variety of causes. The holy book is not a philosophic discourse on abstruse subjects, though it contains philosophic truth. It is a passionate appeal to the feelings of man. In such an appeal sonorous and rhythmical language plays an important part, but in translation this element disappears, to the great disadvantage of scholars ignorant of Arabic. The Koran also contains many repetitions of the same argument, thought or expression but repetition in preaching is essential to bring a point home to the mind of the audience though it might be a blemish in writing. Any criticism of the divine book which does not make sufficient allowance for the points mentioned above cannot but be erroneous.

When the Koran was collected first, it was not arranged in chronological order. The longer chapters were placed first and the shorter ones were put in the end. As the longer chapters were generally later revelations, the result of the arrangement has been practically to reverse the chronological order. Ninety suras which form about two-thirds of the Koran, were revealed in Mecca and the rest in Medina. The

Meccan suras mainly deal with one sublime theme, *viz.*, the worship of one true God. To teach this simple, but all-important truth, three main arguments have been advanced in the Koran. In chaste and condensed but fiery and sonorous language, which has the ring of poetry, the divine verses draw the attention of the reader to the wonders and bounties of nature, to the stars twinkling in the fathomless blue canopy overhead, to the sun and the moon rotating round regularly in their orbits, to the life-giving rain, to the life-sustaining fruits, to life and death, to change and decay and invite him to the worship of their Creator, the one true God, to the exclusion of idols. This is the first argument. A few passages from the holy book are quoted below as illustrations.

Chapter II, verses 158 to 160.[1]

"And your God is one God: There is no God, but He, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the varying of night and day, and the ships that course upon the sea (laden) with what is profitable to mankind, and the water that God hath sent down from heaven, quickening the earth thereby after its death, and

[1] Chapter II is named Sura-i-Baqr or the Cow.

scattering about it all kinds of beasts, and in the changing of the winds, and the clouds that are compelled to do service between heaven and earth, are signs unto a people who understand.

Yet among men are those who take to themselves beside God, idols, which they love as (with) the love for God; but those who have believed are more loving towards God (than those towards their idols)."

Chapter XCI, verses 1 to 10.[1]

By the sun and his rising brightness,
By the moon when she followeth him;
By the day when it revealeth his glory;
By the night when it enshroudeth him,
By the heaven and Him who built it,
By the earth and Him who spread it forth,
By a soul and Him who completed it,
And breathed into it, its wickedness and its piety,
Blessed now is he who hath kept it pure,
And undone is he who has corrupted it.

Sura-i-Rahman or the Merciful, Chapter LV.

The God of Mercy hath taught the Koran
Hath created man,
Hath taught him articulate speech.
The Sun and the Moon have each their times

[1] Chapter XCI is entitled Al-Shams or the Sun.

And the plants and the trees bend in adoration.
And the Heaven, he hath reared it on high and hath appointed the balance ;
That in the balance ye should not transgress.
Weigh therefore with fairness and scant not the balance.
And the Earth, He hath prepared it for the living tribes
Therein are fruits and the palms with sheathed clusters,
And the grain with its husk and the fragrant plants.
Which then of the bounties of your Lord will ye twain[1] deny

* * * *

Blessed be the name of thy Lord full of majesty and glory.

The second argument used in the suras to teach the same plain but great truth is to impress upon the mind of the reader the state of man after death. In vivid and glowing language the Meccan suras have described the perfect happiness of the believers and the good in heaven, in order to lead men and women to the path of rectitude. The unspeakable torments of the infidels and the wicked in hell have also been depicted in burning words to wean them from idolatry and evil ways. A few examples are given below.

[1] "The twain" here means man and jinn or genius.

Sura-i-Naba or the News, Chapter LXXVIII.

Of what do they question together ?
Of the great News,
About which they dispute ?
Nay, but they shall know !
Have we not made the earth as a bed,
And the mountains as tent pegs,
And created you in pairs,
And made your sleep for rest,
And made the night for a mantle
And made the day for bread-winning,
And built above you seven firmaments,
And put therein a burning lamp,
And sent down water pouring from the squeezed cloud,
To bring forth grain and herb withal,
And garden thick with trees ?
Lo ! the Day of Decision is appointed
The day when there shall be a blowing of the trumpet, and ye shall come in troops,
And the Heavens shall be opened and be full of gates,
And the mountains shall be removed and turn into mist.
Verily Hell lieth in wait,
The goal for rebels
To abide therein for ages,
They shall not taste therein coolness nor drink

Save scalding water and running sores,
A meet reward.
Verily they did not expect the reckoning
And they denied our signs with lies;
But everything have we recorded in book :—
"Taste then : for we will only add torment to you"
Verily for the pious is a place of joy,
Garden and vineyards,
And full-bosomed girls, their mates
And a cup brimming over :
There shall they hear neither folly nor lying :—
A reward of thy Lord—a gift sufficient
Of the Lord of the heavens and of the earth and
of what is between them—the Merciful.

Sura-i-Waqia or the Fact, Chapter LVI.

And the people of the right hand—what [1] people
of good omen
Amid thornless lote-trees
And bananas laden with fruit,
And shade outspread
And water flowing
And fruit abundant
Never failing nor forbidden.
And wives exalted
Verily we produced them specially
And made them virgins

[1] "People of the right hand" mean the blessed, because these persons would receive the book of the record of their actions in their right hand. Similarly "people of the left hand" mean the damned.

Amorous, of equal age
For the people of the right hand,
A crowd of the men of you
And a crowd of the latter days.
But the people of the left hand,—what people of ill omen,
Amid burning wind and scalding water
And shade of black smoke
Not cool or grateful.

The third argument in the Meccan suras or rather in the whole Koran is to point out the fate of the transgressors of bygone ages and to draw a lesson of warning therefrom. Reference has been made to the fate of the people of Noah, who were drowned by a deluge, to the host of Pharaoh who were engulfed in the sea, to the Aadites who were destroyed by a storm, to the Thamudites who were stricken to death with a loud sound, to the people of Loot, who were ruined with a sandstorm and to hundreds of other stories. More than 15 thousand verses or a quarter of the holy book refer to the stories of the peoples and prophets of old.

An illustration is given below :—

The people of Noah, before them, called it a lie and they called Our servant a liar and said "Mad," and he was rejected. Then he besought his Lord, "Verily I am overpowered ; defend me." So we opened the gates of heaven with water pouring forth.

And we made the earth break out in 8 rings, and the water met by an order foreordained.

* * * *

And they called it a lie ; but what was My torment and warning ?
Lo, we sent against them a biting wind on a day of settled ill-luck.

* * * *

It tore men away as though they were trunks of palm-trees torn-up.

* * * *

Thamud called the warning a lie ;
And they said, " A single mortal from among ourselves shall we follow ? verily then we should be in error and madness.

* * * *

Lo, we sent against them one shout and they became like the dry sticks of the hurdle-maker.
The people of Loot called the warning a lie.
Lo, We sent a sand storm against them except the family of
Loot, whom we delivered at day-break,
As a favour from us; thus do we reward the thankful.

* * * *

And there came a warning to the people of Pharaoh.
They called our signs a lie—so We gripped them with the grip of omnipotent might.

(*Sura-i-Qamr or the Moon, Chapter LIV*)

Besides the main theme of the recognition and worship of one true God, the Meccan Suras contain beautiful and sublime prayers and inculcate high moral precepts. Consider for instance the first sura which is given below :—

THE FATIHA OR THE BEGINNING

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds,
The Compassionate, the Merciful,
King of the day of Judgment,
Thee we worship and Thee we ask for help
Guide us in the straight way,
The way of those to whom Thou art gracious ;
Not of those upon whom is Thy wrath nor of the erring

Nothing can be more liberal, pure and sublime than the above lines. Persons of all colour and creed can join in that prayer.

Consider again the following passages :—

But the righteous shall be guided away from it ;[1]
He that giveth his substance in charity
And doth no man a kindness in hope of reward
But only in seeking the face of his Lord the Most High ;

[1] *Note.*—"It" refers to hell.

And in the end he shall surely be well pleased.

(*The Night, Chapter XCII*)

On that day[1] shall men come in companies to behold their works
And whosoever hath wrought *an ant's weight of good* shall behold it
And whosoever hath wrought an *ant's weight of evil shall behold it.*

(*Chapter XCIX*)

And who are patient, seeking the face of their Lord, and perform prayer and give alms secretly and openly of what we have provided them, and *turn away evil with good*; for these is the reward of the Abode,[2]

(*Chapter XIII*)

O my people, the life of this world is but a passing joy, but the life to come, that is the abode imperishable.

No precepts can be higher or nobler than those quoted above.

The Medina suras contain almost all the religious, social and judicial laws of Islam. In these suras there are also several passages denouncing the hypocrites and the treacherous Jews. A few passages are quoted below to show some of these laws :—

It is not righteousness that ye turn your face towards the east or the west, but righteousness

[1] *Note.*—" That day " refers to day of judgment.

[2] *Note.*—" Abode " refers to paradise.

is (in) him, who believeth in God and the last day, and the angels, and the scripture, and the prophets, and who giveth wealth for the love of God to his kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the son of the road and them that ask and for the freeing of slaves and who is instant in prayer and giveth the alms; and those who fulfil their covenant when they covenant, and the patient in adversity and affliction and in time of violence, these are they who are true, and these are they who fear God.

(*II. 172*)

Say: We believe in God, and what hath been sent down to thee, and what was sent down to Abraham, and Ishmail, and Isaac, and Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to Moses, and to Jesus, and the prophets from their Lord,—we make no distinction between any of them,—and to Him are we resigned: and whoso desireth other than Resignation (Ialam) for religion, it shall certainly not be accepted from him, and in the life to come, he shall be among losers.

(*III. 78-79*)

O ye who believe, there is prescribed for you the fast as it was prescribed for those before you; may be ye will fear God for a certain number of days, but he amongst you who is sick or on a journey may fast a (like) number of other days. And for those who are able to

fast (and do not), the expiation is feeding a poor man; but he who voluntarily doeth a good act, it is better for him and to fast is better for you, if ye only knew.

(II. 179 & 180)

Proclaim among the people a Pilgrimage; let them come to thee on foot and on every fleet camel, coming by every deep pass, to be present at its benefits to them, and to make mention of God's name at the appointed days over the beasts with which He hath provided them; then let them end the neglect of their persons, and pay their vows and make the circuit of the ancient House.

(XXII. 28-30)

I shall now sum up the teachings of the Koran in the words of Stanley Lane Poole. "This doctrine of one supreme God, to whose will it is the duty of every man to surrender himself, is the kernel of Islam, the truth for which Mohammad lived and suffered and triumphed. But it was no new teaching, as he himself was constantly saying. His was only the last of the revelations. Many prophets—Abraham, Moses and Christ—had taught the same faith before; but people had harkened little to their words. So Mohammad was sent, not different from them, only a messenger, yet the last and the greatest of them, "the seal of prophecy," the "most excellent of the creation of

God." This is the second dogma of Islam: Mohammad is the Apostle of God. It is well worthy of notice that it is not said, 'Mohammad is the only apostle of God.' Islam is more tolerant in this matter than other religions. Its prophet is not the sole commissioner of the Most High nor is his teaching the only true teaching the world has ever received. Many other messengers had been sent by God to guide men to the right, and taught the same religion that was in the mouth of the preacher of Islam. Hence Muslims reverence Moses and Christ only next to Mohammad. All they claim for their founder is that he was the last and the best of the messengers of God.

After the belief in God and his prophets and scriptures, the Muslim must believe in angels, good and evil genii, in the resurrection and the judgment, and in future rewards and punishments. Islam lies more in doing than in believing. That 'faith without works is dead' is a doctrine which every day's routine must bring home to the mind of the devout Muslim. The practical duties of the Mohammadan religion, beyond the actual profession of faith, are the performance of prayer, the giving of alms, the keeping of the fasts and the accomplishing the pilgrimage.

It would take too much space to look closely into the lesser duties of Islam, many of which

suggest exceedingly wholesome lessons to Western civilisation. But we must not pass over one of these minor duties, for it reflects the highest credit upon the founder and professors of Mohammadanism, I mean the humane treatment of animals.

* * * *

Such, in brief outline, is the religion of Mohammad. It is a form of pure theism, simpler and more austere than the theism of most forms of modern Christianity, lofty in its conception of the relation of man to God, and noble in its doctrine of the duty of man to man, and of man to the lower creation. There is little in it of superstition, less of complexity of dogmas ; it is an exacting religion, without the repulsiveness of asceticism ; severe but not merciless."

The prayers, rites and duties prescribed in Islam and set forth in the preceding pages form but the means to an end. They lead not only to material prosperity but to spiritual progress. As a matter of fact the essence of Islam, which literally means "submission to Divine will", is to attain "fana" or "annihilation of self" or in other words to establish complete harmony between human will and the Divine will. This high spiritual development, is attainable by a chosen few only, in the present stage of the civilisation of the world. If this sublime state

of spiritual evolution could be generally attained, earth would have become paradise. Sir Oliver Lodge says, "We now see that if the human will could get into harmony with the Divine will, if the will of God could be done on earth as it is done in Heaven, the Kingdom would have come; earth and heaven would have become one, and the joy of existence would be supreme. This vision,—the hope of this millennium—has been the inspiration ever since of saints and apostles, who with good cause have lamented the pathetic blindness of previous generations, the determined blindness of their own. Our spiritual eyes are closed, even now. Life on this planet is as yet far from the realisation of the Kingdom of Heaven and the miseries and the inequalities of opportunities are too prevailing, the man-made degradation too severe. We are still barely emerged from the savagery of ruthless competition; the condition of the stricken poor is too appalling." The doctrine of submission to divine will however does not mean absence of exertions. In fact such a belief has been one of the causes of the downfall of the Moslems. The noble life of the Prophet himself who without a ray of selfish thought incessantly worked for uplifting humanity gives the most emphatic lie to such a belief.

The laws of Islam are also based upon the sayings of the Prophet. These sayings or

traditions, as they are called, began to be collected about a century after the death of the Prophet, hence all the sayings thus recorded are not likely to be correct, though great pains were taken to ascertain their genuineness.

There are six standard collections of the traditions. These are believed to be generally trustwarthy. Among these standard collections known as Siah Satta or the six correct collections, the Sahi Bokhari is regarded as the most authoritative. Imam Bokhari collected about 6 lacs of traditions, but out of this vast number he selected about 7 thousand which in his judgment were most correct. To judge the correctness of a tradition the names of all the persons by whom the tradition had been handed down in successive generations were ascertained and if in this chain any person happened to be unreliable, the tradition could not be regarded as correct, unless corroborated by some other reliable source. I quote below some of the traditions which for their wisdom deserve to be written in gold.

On Unity and Patriotism.

(1) Difference of opinion among the Moslems is a blessing, if it be sincere and for the sake of God, but it is the greatest curse, if it be from selfish motives and evil desires.

(2) All human beings are the children of God, therefore the man who benefits humanity the most, is the greatest friend of God.

(3) The man who deviates from the majority by an inch takes off the chain of Islam from his neck.

(4) No man becomes faithful (*i. e.*, a Moslem) unless he wishes for his brother (in faith) what he wishes for himself.

(5) The leader of a nation should be its servant.

(6) To please the Moslems is the best of all deeds.

(7) Refrain from controversies and useless discussions.

On Knowledge and Wisdom.

(8) Adopt science from whatever quarter it comes, for it will not injure you.

(9) No poverty is worse than ignorance; no wealth is dearer than intelligence.

(10) The seeker of knowledge and the seeker of the world are the two hungry persons who never get satiety.

(11) The man who has been bestowed with wisdom will be granted salvation.

Miscellaneous.

(12) Of all things humility pleases God the most.

(13) Reward him who has injured you, pardon him who has wronged you, and love him who hates you, then God will be generous in squaring accounts with you and will graciously place you in paradise.

(14) Sin does not fade, virtue does not become stale, noble deed does not die, it now rests with you to be what you like.

(15) Contemplation of God cures the heart.

(16) To war with evil propensities is the greatest of all wars.

(17) God will give you better things than what you give up for his sake.

I commend the dicta on unity and patriotism not only to the leaders but the rank and file of the Moslem community.

CHAPTER XIII

The Illness, and Death of the Prophet.

Two nights before the expiration of Safar of the eleventh Hegira, the Prophet got a severe headache, but in spite of his illness, he continued to conduct the public prayers. One day with the consent of his holy wives, he came to the apartment of Hadzrat Ayesha, though it was not her turn and desired to pass his last days there. On this occasion, he appeared in the mosque, and forgetting his pain and leaving aside all considerations of self, he prayed for the benefit of the soul of those brave men who fell in the battle of Ohod and sacrificed their lives in the cause of Islam. Turning his thoughts to the audience, he blessed them and exhorted them to fear God and not to exalt themselves in this world, reminding them of the following words of the Koran:— "The dwelling of the other life, we will give unto them who do not seek to exalt themselves on earth or to do wrong, for the happy issue will attend the pious."

Three days before his demise, the strength of the Prophet failed him, he therefore commanded Hadzrat Abu Bakr to lead the public prayers.

On one occasion when the Prophet was very ill, he asked for ink and paper to record something which would prevent the Moslems from going astray. A few persons thought that the Prophet was delirious because the Koran in their opinion was sufficient for their purposes. After a short discussion, the writing materials were provided, but the Prophet changed his mind in the meantime and desired to be left alone.

In the morning of Monday, the 12th of Rabia I, of 11 A. H. the Prophet felt a little better. It was the lull before the storm. While Hadzrat Abu Bakr was conducting the morning prayers, the Prophet stepped into the mosque, looked around with a smile of indescribable pleasure, sat by the side of Hadzrat Abu Bakr and joined in the prayers in that posture. After the service was over, he said in an audible voice, "By the Lord! as for myself no man can lay hold of me in any matter; I have not made lawful anything except what God hath made lawful; nor have I prohibited ought but that which God in his book hath prohibited." Being exhausted by the exertion, he retired to his bed in Hadzrat Ayesha's apartment. He was now sinking fast. He asked for a pitcher of water, and wetting his face, prayed thus:—"O Lord, I beseech thee to assist me in the agonies of death." After a short while, he prayed in a whisper:— "Lord! grant me pardon and join me to the companionship on

high." Then he uttered at intervals :—"Eternity in Paradise," "Pardon," "Yes; the blessed companionship on high." While thus praying in a whisper the holy soul of the Prophet about noon of that day soared high and joined the Beneficent Universal Soul.

Such was the peaceful and happy end of one of the noblest beings this world ever saw. Nature endowed him with an impressive and lovely appearance and also lavished on him all moral virtues. He was of medium height and of fair colour, with a rosy tinge. The head was large with a broad forehead and the eyes were bright, black and big. Born in the midst of a society addicted to gambling, drinking and licentiousness, he was untouched with any vice. His was a kind, just, truthful, thoughtful and faithful nature, which earned for him the title of Al—Amin (the Trusty) from his compatriots. Being deeply impressed by the misery of the people around him and strongly stirred by their gross idolatry, he gave himself up to thinking and meditation for discovering a remedy for the prevailing distress and darkness. He would often pass days and nights together in the solitude of Mount Hira in deep communion with the Soul of the universe. One day in the midst of his meditation the Divine voice called him to the duty of regenerating humanity. Responding to this call, he began to preach,

amidst filthy abuses and implacable persecution, the religion of one Great God, and denounced the idols of his nation and their vices. He further formulated a code of noble and pure moral rules. With superhuman courage, perseverance and patience, he continued to discharge his duty singlehanded and stuck to his post. When persecution failed, the Koreish attempted to bribe him into silence with the offer of a princely fortune and chieftaincy of the tribe. But worldly position and fortune were nothing to the lofty and unselfish soul that was burning with a desire to regenerate humanity. He rejected the offer and pressed on in his mission. The Koreish redoubled their persecutions, so he advised his noble but small band of disciples to migrate to Abyssinia. At last his preaching took root in the holy soil of Medina, whither he sent his followers and in the end joined them. Here with the genius of a divine statesman, he laid the foundations of a commonwealth. In self-defence he had to take the field against enormous odds. The heaven-born genius of a general, which he displayed, conquered all obstacles and he soon became the virtual master of the whole of Arabia. But in the hour of triumph he was as humble and as forgiving as he was in the days of his adversity, though to some enemies of the state he had to be stern. In spite of considerable wealth, on account of

his royal one-fifth share of the spoils of war, he lived a very simple life. He and his family had sometimes to live without any food, as he would profusely spend his money in charity. He used to milk his own goats and repair his own clothes. He would visit the sick, sympathise with the distressed and follow to the grave every funeral procession he met. He loved the poor and respected them. He would visit the lowliest and accept the invitation of the meanest slave. Every night he would invite some of the homeless poor who slept in the mosque. His habits were regular. In the day, when not actually engaged in prayers, he would receive visitors and transact state business. At night he used to sleep very little, but pass his time in prayers and meditation. Though ignorant of letters, he thoroughly studied nature and was capable of influencing equally the learned and the illiterate. He used to display broad liberalism and encourage learning and inquiry. Those who saw him would declare that they had never before met his equal and would irresistably love him and revere him. In short he combined in himself the skill and courage of a general, the genius of a statesman, the profoundness of a philosopher, the excellence of a moralist and the piety of a saint. To imitate this noble life is the highest ambition of every true Moslem.

CHAPTER XIV

Hadzrat Abu Bakr as-Siddiq

A General Sketch of the Life and Character of as-Siddiq.

Birth of Abu Bakr about 573 A. D.; his descent and his surnames.

Abu Bakr was born in Mecca two years and a few months after the year of the Elephant.[1] He was descended from the Bani Taym clan, a branch of the noble Koreish tribe. His father was Othman better known as Abu Quhafah. Abu Bakr's real name was Abdullah. It is not known when or why he got the name of Abu Bakr which means "Father of the camel's foal." He got the honourable surname of as-Saddiq or the Truthful, because he was always foremost to testify to the truth of whatever fell from the lips of the Prophet. When the Apostle mentioned the fact of his nocturnal flight to Jerusalem and thence to heaven [2] he was the first to believe it and testify to its truth. One of his titles was

[1] The year of the Elephant was the year 570 A.D. in which Abraha, the Abyssinian governor of Yemen, attacked Mecca with elephants and troops.

[2] For the story of the nocturnal flight called Miraj or Ascension see *ante*.

Atiq or the Liberated either because he was assured of exemption from hell fire [1] or because of the comeliness (*i.e.* itaqat) of his appearance.[2] His family was one of the ten, in which the government of Mecca was vested. The function of "diat", or the assessment of compensation for murder and other damages, wested in his family and in his own time, he was the person who performed that duty.

Abu Bakr's personal description and some of his virtues.

He was a tall but thin man with a stoop. His complexion was very fair; his eyes were deep set; his forehead prominent; and his cheeks fleshless. He dyed his beard with henna and katam (kinds of herb). Very little is known of his life in the days of pre-Islam. He used to abstain from wine, though its use was very wide-spread in those days. It is said that he never worshipped any idol even in the days of Igno rance.[3] Once his father took him to an idol and asked him to prostrate himself before the image, saying it was an object of worship. As soon as his father went out, he drew nearer to the idol

[1] The Prophet assured Abu Bakr and nine others of exemption from hell fire and for this reason they are known as "Ashrah-i-Mubashsharah," that is, the Ten who received the good news. Omar, Othman, Aly, Talha, Zobeir, Saad bin Abi Waqqas, Sayd, Abu Obaydah and Abdur Rahman bin Auf are the nine others.

[2] See As Suyuti's History of the Caliphs.

[3] The pre-Islamic period is known as the days of ignorance because people were then ignorant of the unity of God and the ordinances of the Prophet.

and prayed for food saying he was hungry. No reply came. He again said he was naked and prayed for dress. There was no response. He then took up a stone and said "I shall throw it at you; better protect yourself, if you be an object of worship." As the idol did not show any sign of self-defence, Abu Bakr hurled the stone at it, which fell down with a crash. It is therefore no wonder that this advanced soul became one of the earliest converts to Islam.

Abu Bakr's charity.

He followed the profession of a cloth merchant and had trade relations all over the country from Yemen to Syria. His business fetched him a good income which he spent with a free hand in charity. His favours to his relations, his hospitality to the hungry and his kindness to the poor were proverbial. On his conversion to Islam, he spent his fortune with unstinted liberality for the propagation of the religion and for the benefit of the Moslems. He bought and liberated no less than seven slaves whom their masters had tortured for their religious belief. Among them was the Abyssinian slave, Hadzrat Bilal, whom the Prophet selected for proclaiming the prayer calls, on account of his stentorian voice. Amir bin Fohayra, the man who supplied the holy Apostle and Abu Bakr with milk in the cave of mount Thur, was also one of these liberated slaves. Of forty thousand dirhems which he possessed on the

day of his conversion, he had only five thousand left at the time of the Hijrat or the Flight, on account of his expenses in the cause of Islam.

On one occasion the Apostle of God asked his followers to give alms proportionate to their means. Consequently Omar placed half of his property at the disposal of the Prophet. He was confident that for once he would surpass Abu Bakr in charity. But Abu Bakr brought all his belongings and when the holy Prophet inquired what he had kept for his family, he replied, "I have reserved for them God and his Prophet." Omar became ashamed of his presumption and felt that he could never excel Abu Bakr in any charitable act.

At night Omar bin Khittab used to minister to the wants of a blind aged woman, living in the suburbs of Medina. Once he found that some person had visited her before his arrival and had given her necessary assistance. On the next day Omar arrived earlier to ascertain who had anticipated him in his labour of love. Ere long a man approached the decrepit woman, and lo, he was no other than Abu Bakr, the then ruling Caliph.

Anecdotes showing the nobility of Abu Bakr's character.

Once the Apostle, after the morning prayers, turned towards his companions and asked, "who among you hath begun the day by fasting?" Abu Bakr replied "I." Again the Prophet inquired "who among you hath fed the poor

to-day?" It was Abu Bakr alone who replied, "I." The next question was "who among you hath visited the sick to-day?" This time also the same reply came from Abu Bakr. Then the Apostle said "these things shall not come together in a man but he shall enter paradise."

On a certain occasion Abu Bakr, in a discussion, used an unpleasant expression with reference to Rabia bin Kaab which caused pain to the latter. Abu Bakr at once regretted for what he had said and requested Rabia to retort. Rabia naturally refused to retaliate, so Abu Bakr approached the holy Apostle and through his intervention secured pardon.

Abu Bakr's simplicity.

Abu Bakr was simple to the extreme. He used to move about like an ordinary individual. When he sent out the Syrian expedition, he walked a short distance by the side of Osama, the Lieutenant in command of the force, who was on horseback. Osama requested the Caliph either to ride or to permit him to walk by his side. The Caliph accepted none of the suggestions, saying that he was walking in the way of the Lord. He used to give a helping hand to the girls in his neighbourhood by milking their goats.

Abu Bakr's learning.

Abu Bakr was one of the most learned and eloquent men of his time. He learnt the Koran by heart and knew it so thoroughly that the Apostle would

invariably appoint him Imam, in preference to others, to lead the prayers. He remembered numerous traditions which he would quote on appropriate occasions. His short but extempore speech on the occasion of his election testifies to his eloquence, tact and sound judgment. His sermons were solemn, instructing and impressive. An extract from one of them is given below:—"and beware ye of following vain .desire, for verily he prospereth who is preserved from lust and greed and anger: and beware ye of pride, for what pride belongeth to him who is made of earth and who afterwards returneth to earth and then the worm devoureth him? for to-day he is alive and to-morrow he is dead; therefore act ye uprightly from day to day and from hour to hour, and fear the prayer of the oppressed and number yourselves among the dead; and be ye patient, for every work is accomplished through patience and be ye watchful, for watchfulness is profitable. Act uprightly, for a good act is acceptable to God, and refrain from things against which the Lord hath warned ye under pain of His wrath; and vie ye with one another in hastening to obtain the things which the Lord hath promised ye in His mercy and teach ye and yourselves comprehend, and be heedful and in fear, for verily the Lord hath declared unto ye the things for which He hath destroyed those that were

before ye, and the things through which He hath delivered those whom he delivered before ye. Verily He hath manifested unto ye in His Book His commands and His prohibitions and the works He approveth and those He abhorreth; and verily by my soul I will not be wanting to you—and God is He whose assistance is implored, and there is no power nor strength but in the Lord. And know ye, verily, that in your works in which ye have been sincere with God, ye then obeyed God and preserved your portion of excellence, and attained unto your desire, and what ye have done over and above what is enjoined for your faith, keep before ye as religious merits, that ye may make satisfaction for those who have gone before ye,—and make your charitable donations even at the time of your poverty and self-need of them. Then bethink ye—O servants of God—of your brethren and companions those that have departed, for they have attained to the works that they sent before them. Verily the Lord hath no co-partner, and between Him and any of His creatures there is no mediatory influence that can bestow good upon him or avert from him evil save in His worship and obedience to His commands, for verily there is no good after which cometh hell-fire, and no evil in the evil after which cometh heaven. I say unto ye these words, and may

God have mercy upon me and ye, and bless ye the Prophet and peace be upon him and the mercy of God and His blessing."

Abu Bakr's knowledge of genealogy.

Abu Bakr was thoroughly versed in the genealogy of the various tribes and clans of Arabia together with their virtues and vices. It was then a favourite subject of the country, occupying the place of history in modern times. The knowledge was made use of in poetic eulogy or satire which were popular branches of learning. Hassan bin Thabit, a Moslem poet, used to satire the Koreish. The Apostle asked him "How do you satire the Koreish as I am one of them and how do you lampoon Abu Sufian, my close relative?" The poet replied that he excluded the Apostle from the satire as hair (that is minute impurities) is excluded from flour. Hearing the remark, the Apostle directed him to learn the genealogy of the Koreish from Abu Bakr. Hassan accordingly mastered the subject under as-Siddiq. His subsequent verses displayed so accurate and wide a knowledge of genealogy that many suspected Abu Bakr to be their author. Once Abu Bakr met an Arab of whom he enquired to what tribe he belonged. The Arab replied Rabia. He again questioned if the man came from the senior branch. The Arab replied in the affirmative. Abu Bakr mentioned the different families of the principal branch and learnt that

the Arab was not from any of these families. He then remarked that the Arab must belong to the junior branch.

Abu Bakr's correct interpretation of dreams.

Abu Bakr was an expert in the art of interpreting dreams and in this branch of knowledge he was second to none but the Apostle of God himself. The instances of his correct interpretation of dreams are too numerous to be narrated. Two well known instances are given below. His daughter Ayesha once saw in a dream that three moons came down to her house. On hearing of it Abu Bakr said that her dream was true and that three of the most eminent men would be buried in her house. After-events showed that the interpretation was true to the letter. The remains of the Apostle, Abu Bakr and Omar lie buried in her room. On one occasion the Apostle said, "I dreamt as it were that I and thou were vying with each other in mounting a ladder and I preceded thee by two steps and a half." Abu Bakr replied, "O Apostle of God, the Lord will take thee unto his forgiveness and mercy and I shall live after thee two years and a half." This sequence of events came to pass.[1]

Abu Bakr's courage.

In spite of his gentleness Abu Bakr was firm and brave. Once in the infancy of Islam, the Koreish assembled in the mosque of Kaaba and talked

[1] The illustrations are taken from Jalaluddin-as Suyuti.

about the Apostle. By chance the Apostle came there. They asked him if he spoke ill of their Gods. He was not the person to tell an untruth. His brave reply was in the affirmative ; whereupon the crowd fell upon him. Hearing of the incident, Abu Bakr hurried straight to the spot, hit one man, threatened another, pushed a third and said, " Woe unto ye ; will ye slay a man who saith, " My God is Allah." The fury of the Koreish now turned upon Abu Bakr. They assaulted him so severely that the hair of his head came out wherever he touched it.

On the day of the battle of Badr, he volunteered to guard the Prophet, from the attack of the Koreish. To frighten the enemy he brandished a sword over the head of his master and attacked any one who dared to approach him. He exhibited a rare moral courage in ordering the expedition under Osama to proceed at a time when Arabia was in rebellion and Medina was not only inadequately defended but in imminent danger of an attack. About this time some of the Arabs fell back from the faith and asked for reduction in the number of prayers and remission of the poor rate. The times were so bad that even a man of iron will like Omar advised him to conciliate the Arabs, but he remained as firm as adamant. He replied, " I hoped for your help, but you offer none. You were haughty in the days of Ignorance, but you have become mean-spirited

in Islam. Do you think, I shall conciliate them by lying verses and deceitful eloquence. Alas, the Prophet is dead and divine inspiration is withheld. By God, I will do battle with them as long as I can grasp the sword in my hand, even if they deny me the worth of a camel's halter."

Abu Bakr's disinterestedness and piety.

Abu Bakr led an extremely simple life. He ate coarse flour and clothed himself in rough garment. On the day next after his election, he was seen going towards the market. Omar asked, "Whither art thou going." He replied, "to the market place." Omar said, "Dost thou do this although thou hast been appointed ruler over the Moslems ?" He answered, "Whence then shall my family be fed ?" Omar replied, "Come, Abu Obayda (who was then in charge of the Treasury) shall provide for thee." They visited Abu Obayda who said, "I will set apart for thee, the allowance for one man of the Fugitives,—neither that assigned to the best, nor to the meanest among them, and a garment for winter and for summer ; when thou hast worn a thing out, thou canst return it and take another." Thus he assigned to him clothing, bedding and half a sheep a day. According to another account, it is said that two thousand dirhems a year were assigned to him, which was afterwards increased to five thousand. At the time of his death he told his daughter Ayesha, "We

have governed the affairs of the Muslims and have not taken for ourselves either a dinar or a dirhem, but we have eaten the fill of our bellies with the coarse flour of their food, and clothed our back with their rough garments and there doth not remain with us of the booty taken by the Muslims, save this Nubian slave and this camel for drawing water, and this coarse garment, but when I die, send them to Omar." Present-day statesmen and patriots who fight for self-aggrandisement may well take a lesson from the above anecdote.[1] His piety was beyond description. Abu Bakr had a slave who used to pay him an impost on his earning. One day he brought some food to Abu Bakr which he ate. The slave then asked Abu Bakr if he knew what was that food. Abu Bakr inquired "What it is?" The slave said, "once, had told the fortune of a man in the days of Ignorance, and my divination was not just in as much as I deceived him, but he met me and gave me that which you have eaten." Hearing the story Abu Bakr put his hand in his throat and vomited out what he had eaten.[2]

[1] The account given in this paragraph has been taken from As-Suyuti Mr. Amir Aly in his History of the Saracens has given a different version. He says that Abu Bakr on his death-bed directed one of his properties to be sold in order to refund to the estate the sum he had received as salary.

[2] The incident has been narrated by As-Suyuti in his History of the Caliphs.

Abu Bakr's wives and children.

Abu Bakr married two wives in the days of Ignorance. One of them was Qȧtila, daughter of Abdul Uzza, by whom he had a son named Abdullah and a daughter called Asama. The other wife was Ruman, daughter of Aamir, by whom he had two children, *viz.*, Abdur Rahman and Ayesha. After his conversion to Islam, he married two other wives in Medina, *viz.*, Habiba, daughter of Kharija Ansari, and Asama, daughter of Aamis. The former bore to him Umm Kulthum and the latter gave birth to Mohammed. Of the above wives and children, all survived him except Qatila.

CHAPTER XV

An Account of the Life of as-Siddiq from the Year of the Flight to the Death of the Apostle.

Abu Bakr's attempted migration to Abyssinia.

In spite of the oppressions of the Koreish, Abu Bakr stuck to Medina for the sake of the company of the Apostle, but the persecution of the Koreish increased daily. In the thirteenth year of the Mission the free performance of religious duties became difficult, so Abu Bakr left Mecca with a view to migrate to Abyssinia. In the way Ibn Daghana a chief of Mecca met him. Learning the object of Abu Bakr's journey, he assured him protection and persuaded him to return to the city, because he knew very well the benevolent and pure nature of his character. When they reached Mecca, Ibn Daghana appealed to the citizens, not to molest a person like Abu Bakr "who earned money for the needy, dealt kindly with his relatives, carried the load of the fatigued, fed the hungry, and sympathised with the unfortunate" and told them that he had assured him of his protection. The Koreish agreed not to violate the promised

protection, provided Abu Bakr offered his prayers in a low voice and in his own house so that their women and children might not be influenced. For a short time Abu Bakr acted in the manner, but he could not long control his devotional emotion. Ere long he made a mosque in his yard where he used to read the Koran and offer prayers often bursting forth into tears. His emotional prayers drew the women and children of his neighbours to his house. To stop this state of things, the Koreish complained to Ibn Daghana who requested Abu Bakr to observe the conditions of the guaranteed protection or to forego its advantages. Abu Bakr replied that he could not give up his prayers, but would gladly discard his protection and accept that of his God and the Apostle. Hadzrat Abu Bakr accompanied the Prophet in the perilous journey from Mecca to Yathreb or Medina.[1] Reaching the city, he became the guest of Kharija bin Zaid [2] in the quarter known as Sunh. He repaid Kharija's hospitality by marrying his daughter Habiba. When Abdullah learnt from the guide that his father had reached Medina safely, he came there with the family of his father, including Ayesha and her

[1] For an account of the journey, which is called Hijrat, see the corresponding part in the Life of the Prophet.

[2] In some accounts it is said that Abu Bakr alighted in the house of Habiba bin Asaf.

mother, Ruman. On their arrival Abu Bakr took his residence in Sunh.

Miscellaneous events.

In the seventh or eighth month of Abu Bakr's arrival, the Apostle celebrated his nuptials with Ayesha at Sunh. Though she had been betrothed for three years, she was now only ten years old, but in spite of her tender age she developed her physical and intellectual charms even at that period. In this year the Moslems were united with one another in a "brotherhood" in which arrangement Abu Bakr became the "brother" of Kharija bin Zaid.[1]

In the 2nd year of the Hegira, Abu Bakr was present in the famous battle of Badr, which stands as an imperishable testimony to the extraordinary zeal and valour of the Moslems. In that action, the duty of guarding the Apostle, in the shed temporarily erected for his shelter, devolved on Abu Bakr. As seen before, he courageously discharged this duty, by repelling all attacks upon the Apostle. On this occasion the Apostle with profuse tears in his eyes earnestly prayed for the success of his followers. Abu Bakr with characteristic faith in the efficacy of his master's prayers, stopped him short in the act of devotion and said "the

[1] Ibn Khuldun says that Abu Bakr became the brother of Kharija. For an account of the brotherhood see the corresponding portion of the life of the Prophet.

prayers you have already offered are more than sufficient for the victory of the Moslems." As a matter of fact, the Moslems in the end won a glorious victory, and secured a good many prisoners. On the advice of Abu Bakr, the Apostle set at liberty most of the prisoners on taking ransoms from them. In the same year Abu Bakr took part in the battle of Ohod which terminated disastrously for the Moslems. Abu Bakr was one of the few companions, who took the wounded Apostle from the battlefield to a place of safety in the hill.

In the Battle of the Trench (5 A.H.) Abu Bakr zealously defended the portion of the trench assigned to him and in the next year he accompanied the Apostle to Hudayba (a day's march from Mecca) with the object of performing the Omra or lesser pilgrimage. As the Meccans intended to prevent by force the Apostle's entry into the city, his party halted at Hudayba. Othman bin Affan, who was popular with the Meccans, was sent to the Koreish to assure them of the peaceful intentions of the Apostle. On account of delay in his return, it was rumoured that Othman had been killed. For this reason the Apostle stood under an acacia tree and took oath from his companions binding themselves to fight with the Meccans.[1] Abu Bakr was one of those

[1] As the oath was taken under a tree the incident is also known as the Oath of the Tree. For a more detailed description see the corresponding portion of the life of the Prophet.

who took the oath. Subsequently it was found that the news was false and on his advice a treaty was signed with the Meccans. In the campaign against Khayber (7 A.H.), he once led an unsuccessful attack against fort Qamus, the strongest of all the forts in Khayber. In 8 A.H, he took part in the battle of Hunayn and in the siege of Tayif and in the expedition against Tabuk. Though no fighting took place in the last of these expeditions, it was a difficult campaign as it was undertaken at a time of scarcity and in the hottest part of the year. On account of the prevailing distress the Apostle requested his wealthy followers to contribute towards the expenses of the adventure. In response to the call Abu Bakr voluntarily made over all the wealth he possessed. In the next year he had the honour of leading the pilgrims to Mecca as a representative of the Apostle. The next great event of his life was his election as Caliph or successor of the Prophet, an account of which will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

Suppression of Rebellion and Apostasy in Arabia.

Effect of the Prophet's death.

The news of the demise of the noble Prophet on 12th Rabia I of 11 A.H. had a strange effect. His companions were bewildered with grief and lost their head, but the disaffected were exultant. These latter said that a man who dies is not a Prophet. Omar drew out his sword and said, "The disaffected think that the Apostle of God is dead. By God, he is not dead ; but like Christ he has ascended to heaven, and will return soon. I will sever the hands and feet of those who say that the Prophet is dead. If any one ever say the same thing in my presence, I will behead him." Hadzrat Ayesha communicated the sad news to his father who had gone to his home at Sunh (a suburb of Medina) because in the morning he had seen the Prophet apparently well. On receipt of the heart-rending news, Hadzrat Abu Bakr in haste returned to Medina on horseback and entered into the room of his daughter where the corpse had been lying covered with a sheet. Satisfying himself that life was

extinct, he kissed the face of his departed dear master with these words, "Sweet wert thou in life and sweet thou art in death." He then issued forth from the chamber and asked his friend Omar to sit down, but the latter heeded him not. The crowd now moved away from Omar and assembled round Hadzrat Abu Bakr who addressed them in these memorable words—"Whoso worshippeth Mohammed let him know Mohammed is dead, but whoso worshippeth God let him know that God liveth and dieth not"—continuing he recited the following passage from the holy Koran :—"And what is Mohammed more than that he is an Apostle and that is all. Before him other Apostles have lived and passed away; if Mohammed die a natural death or be killed, will you retrace your steps to idolatry? And he who will revert to idolatry shall not injure God in the least." The solemn words of Hadzrat Abu Bakr changed the angle of vision of the vast multitude who now quieted down.

While the above proceedings were going on in the great mosque of Medina, another scene of a quite different nature was being enacted in another quarter of the city. The Ansar or the original citizens of Medina assembled in a humble shed. It was the Saqifa or hall of the Bani Saida. There they discussed about the election of a successor to the Prophet. In effect they said :—,'We have given shelter to the strangers, that is,

the Muhajarins, who being too weak to defend themselves in their own city, came helpless to us. The success of Islam and their prosperity are due to our good swords. They should not now be allowed to lord it over us in our own city. If we allow this, we and our posterity will rue the day." They in a manner further indicated that they would elect Saad bin Obada the Khazrajite leader to be their chief. Saad himself, who was one of the twelve men who had taken the pledge of Aqaba, was lying covered up in a corner of the hall on account of his illness. A few Refugees who were present there demurred to the proposition, hence a hot discussion ensued. This news soon reached the great mosque, where were Abu Bakr and Omar. The moment was critical; immediate action was necessary, otherwise any rash or inconsiderate decision of the Ansar might kindle the flames of civil war. They had therefore to leave the mosque while the corpse of the holy Prophet was still lying unburied. They with Abu Obayda and a few others hastened to the spot. When they reached the Saqifa, Omar was about to speak, but Abu Bakr stopped him. Addressing the assembly, he said, "God, who be blessed and magnified, sent the Apostle to direct and guide us to adore Him, and to lead us to bear testimony to His unity. As the Arabs had been worshipping numerous Gods, from generation to generation, they found it hard to

abandon the religion of their ancestors; therefore they resisted his lordship openly and secretly, accusing him of falsehood. The Lord, however, who bestows gifts before they are deserved, distinguished the first Mohajirins by instilling into them sincere belief, so they disregarded the paucity of their own number and the multitude of their opponents. The persecutions and evil intentions of the unbelievers, had no fear for them. They are undoubtedly the men who worshipped God the Most High and Glorious on earth and believed his Apostle. They are of his own tribe and the most worthy of the Caliphate, and no one will wrangle with them except such as have gone astray from the right path. O you Ansar, we are aware of your laudable acts and what you have done to promote the bright religion, to elevate the banners of Islam, and to proclaim the ordinances. This is evident to all our contemporaries, therefore the Amirship is to belong to us and the Wazirship to you, so that no business will be transacted without your consent and consultation." [1]

Abu Bakr's election and his lofty speech on the duties of the ruler and the ruled.

On the conclusion of Abu Bakr's speech, the men of Medina cried out, "Let there be one chief from you and one from us." "Away with you," cried out Omar, "two cannot stand together." Even Saad muttered assent to

[1] Quoted from Rowzatus—Safa.

this proposition. Angry words were exchanged and the old spirit of sanguinary tribal conflict was up. To put a stop to the useless and dangerous discussion, Abu Bakr with consummate tact pointed out Omar and Abu Obayda and asked the assembly to choose one of them as Caliph. Bashir bin Saad, though a Khazrajite concurred in the view that the Caliph should be a Koreishite. Both Omar and Abu Obayda with characteristic disinterestedness voted the venerable and pious Abu Bakr as Caliph and swore allegiance to him.[1] Their nominee commanded considerable respect and wielded a good deal of influence on account of his seniority, his simplicity, his firmness, his wealth as a merchant, and his authority as one of the chief magistrates. For these reasons, the example set by Omar and Abu Obayda spread rapidly. The Ausites of Medina, jealous of the power of the Khazrajites, swore allegiance to Hazrat Abu Bakr. Others followed them and in a short time the whole assembly except Saad bin Obada swore allegiance. Hadzrat Abu Bakr was thus duly elected Caliph and a rising conflagration was nipped in the bud.

On the day next after his election, Hadzrat Abu Bakr ascended the pulpit of the great Mosque, and addressing the crowd who assembled there to mourn the loss of the Prophet, delivered

[1] Some historians say that Bashir was first to swear allegiance to Hadzrat Abu Bakr.

a speech breathing a high ideal of the duties and responsibilities of the ruler and the ruled. He said, "O ye people! now I am chief over you, although I am not the best among you. If I do well, support me, and if I incline to evil, direct me aright. Follow the truth wherein is faithfulness; eschew the falsehood wherein is treachery. He that is weak among you, is strong before me in as much as I shall restore unto him his due, if it please God; and he that is strong is weak in as much as I shall take that which is due from him, if it please God. Leave not off to fight in the ways of the Lord; whosoever leaveth off, him verily shall the Lord abase. Obey me wherein I obey the Lord and his Prophet; when I disobey, then obedience to me shall not be obligatory upon you."

Allegiance of Hadzrat Aly and recusancy of Saad bin Obada.

Hadzrat Aly did not forthwith take the oath of allegiance, but the public spirit of the husband of Hadzrat Fatima subsequently led him to accept the leadership of Hadzrat Abu Bakr. In most accounts it is narrated that he took the oath of fealty after the death of his wife Fatima which melancholy event took place six months after the election. Saad bin Obada alone persisted in his refusal, but he was left alone as he was a solitary exception. He ceased to appear in court or in the mosque. In the Caliphate of Hadzrat

Omar, he left for Syria, where he died in obscurity.[1]

Rebellion in Arabia and the despatch of the expedition under Osama.

The short period of ten years' rule of the divine Prophet was not sufficient to effect a permanent change in the character of the wild, adventurous and uncurbed Arabs. The daily prayers, the fast of the Ramzan, the abstinence from wine, and the tithes were irksome to them. Even in the life-time of the Apostle himself, a few gifted but unscrupulous persons pretended to be inspired beings. The news of his demise was a signal for the activity of these impostors and the spread of rebellion and apostasy. In the midst of all these troubles, the venerable Caliph Abu Bakr with awful boldness and staunch loyalty to his deceased master's wishes, ordered all the fighting men to assemble at Jorf under the command of Osama for a raid into Belcaa and the province of Jordon. In obedience to the command, the fighting men of Medina and its neighbourhood encamped at Jorf. Even a companion of the rank of Hadzrat Omar joined the force. The sense of the army was that the city should not be left undefended at the critical time, that the expedition should be undertaken, on a more favourable occasion and that a more

[1] Tabari says that Saad bin Obada swore allegiance in the hall of the Bani Saida on the day following the election.

experienced man should be placed in command of the expedition if it must proceed. Omar, who was deputed to represent these views to the Caliph, informed him of the opinion of the army. Hearing the message Hadzrat Abu Bakr jumped up in excitement. On sitting down he firmly replied, "Even if I had feared that some ferocious animal would tear me into pieces or some one would plunder me in the city, still I would despatch the expedition under Osama. None can have the hardihood to act contrary to the orders of the Prophet nor dismiss him whom he appointed. I will not cease to strive till I send Osama."[1]

When the army was ready to march, Hadzrat Abu Bakr repaired to the camp at Jorf and walked with the force for a short distance. "Be mounted," said Osama to him, "or else I will dismount and walk by thee." "Not so," replied the Caliph, "I will not mount, I will walk and soil my feet for a short while, in the ways of the Lord. Verily, every step, in the ways of the Lord, is equal to the merit of manifold good works, and wipeth out a multitude of sins." He then gave to Osama the following instructions, which breathe a lofty tone of humanity in warfare :—"Avoid treachery and deceit. Depart not in any wise from the right. Thou shalt mutilate none; neither shalt thou kill

[1] This account is given in Ibn Khaldun.

child, nor aged man, nor woman. Injure not the date palm, neither burn it with fire, nor cut down any tree wherein is food for man or beast. Slay not of the flocks, or herds or camels, except for needful sustenance.—And the monks with shaven heads who spend their lives in monasteries, if they submit, leave them in their cloister unmolested. Now march forward in the name of the Lord, and may He protect you from sword and pestilence." With the above parting injunctions, he returned to Medina in the company of Omar whom he detained for counsel at home. Osama marched in the direction of Duma and the high lands south of Syria. He inflicted severe punishment by falling upon the Bani Codzaa and the Christian tribes, who under the Roman flag, had defeated the Moslem army at Muta killing his father Zaid. After a period of either forty or seventy days, Osama returned victorious with numerous prisoners and a large spoil.

Effect of Osama's expedition and the extent of rebellion in Arabia.

The bold but risky policy which the Caliph followed as a religious duty in sending out the expedition under Osama had several advantages. It led the wild Bedouins to believe in the stability of the Government, and also in the strength of the Moslems, who could at such a critical time undertake a foreign invasion. These considerations restrained many

of them from taking the offensive, which they would otherwise have done. While Osama was fighting on the borders of Syria, news of apostasy, rebellion, withholding of the tithes, and attack upon defenceless Moslem representatives reached Medina almost daily from various quarters of the Peninsula. "The faithful were massacred and some confessors suffered a cruel death."

Except the Koreish and the Bani Thaqif of Tayif and a few tribes here and there, all Arabia threw off the yoke of Islam. To the earnest appeal of Moslem representatives for help, Hadzrat Abu Bakr could only instruct them to hold on with the handful of loyal men whom they could secure. The Caliph took all the precautions, which under the circumstances were possible for the defence of the city. He summoned all the available men of the city and the neighbouring friendly tribes and posted pickets to guard the various approaches to the city.

Attack of the Bani Abs and Bani Zibyan repelled.

Taking advantage of these untoward circumstances, the tribes of Abs and Zibyan living in the near desert to the east sent a deputation to Medina, asking for reduction in the number of prayers and exemption from the tithes. Hadzrat Abu Bakr firmly rejected both the requests. To him religion without prayers was a farce. As regards the tithe he boldly said, "If you withhold but the tither of a camel, I

will fight with you for the same." Thus the members of the deputation returned unsuccessful but they noticed the paucity of men in Medina which circumstance emboldened their tribes to attack the city. The Caliph on his part redoubled his vigilance. He strengthened the pickets and placed them in charge of Aly, Zobier, Talha and Abdullah bin Masud. In the great mosque all available men were kept ready for any contingency. The rebels attempted to surprise the city from Zul Qossah, the first station from Medina on the road to Najd. The Moslem pickets ever on the alert held them up till the main guard coming up from the mosque charged them with fury. Unprepared for such a contingency, the rebels turned back pursued by the Moslems. The enemy while returning played on musical instruments and adopted strange devices to frighten away the camels of Medina. As the trained camels had been sent with the expedition of Osama, the Moslems impressed into service the untrained animals used for drawing water. Frightened by the novel scene, these animals took to flight and did not stop till they reached Medina. Though in the engagement not a single Moslem lost his life, the rebels interpreted the behaviour of the camels as a defeat and contemplated another attack. Hadzrat Abu Bakr anticipated them. With all men capable of bearing arms he attacked the enemy early in

the dawn, while it was yet dark, and took them by surprise. The small force of the Caliph caused havock among the enemy who retreated. Sending the booty under an escort, the Caliph pursued the enemy to Zul Qossah. In the meantime a portion of the enemy fell upon the escort, put them to the sword and recaptured the booty. When Hadzrat Abu Bakr heard of the misadventure he swore to put to death an equal number of the apostates. He drove the enemy out of Zul Qossah, posted a guard there and returned to Medina. Small though the engagement was, its result was of utmost consequence. Defeat at the time would as certainly have spelt the death of Islam, as victory ensured its supremacy. The ability of the Moslems to defend the city in spite of the absence of the fighting men with the expedition of Osama, enhanced their prestige and impressed the enemy with their prowess. Soon after these events Adi, son of Hatim, and two chiefs of two branches of the Bani Tamin brought in tithes to the Caliph. Osama also returned from Syria with the spoils of his brilliant expedition. The darkest hour of peril was now passed. The Moslems wore hopeful and cheerful appearance.

Despatch of eleven Lieutenants for the pacification of different provinces.

The Caliph had now men and money enough to take systematic steps for the pacification of Arabia. He prepared eleven standards

with his holy hands and made them over to different Lieutenants for expeditions into different provinces. At the same time he issued letters to the various apostate tribes, granting them full pardon if they returned to the fold of Islam. The Lieutenants were similarly instructed not to attack any person or tribe if he or they professed Islam and responded to the Azan or call to prayer. This clement and wise policy springing from the very nature of the kind-hearted and mild Caliph won over many wavering persons. One of the eleven standards was given to Khalid bin Saaid for a raid into Syria which became the immediate cause of the war with the Romans. Another standard was given to Khalid bin Walid, a brave and fierce soldier but a skilful general. At times his bravery bordered on rashness, but his judgment was invariably sound, and he knew how to act with dash in critical moments. His heaven-born knowledge of military tactics, had turned the almost certain victory of Ohod into a disaster for the Moslems, and in later years was destined to save the army of Islam from total destruction in the field of Muta. His impetuous and fierce nature sometimes led him to exceed orders and commit excesses but his achievements in the Persian and Syrian wars place him in the front rank of the greatest generals of the world. He richly deserved the title of Saifullah or "the Sword of God" and was

destined to play an important part in the rapid growth of the Moslem empire. Hadzrat Abu Bakr selected this general for the subjugation of the impostor Tulayha bin Khuwaylid.

Defeat of Talayha and pacification of the Banj Asad and the Bani Ghatafan.

In the lifetime of Hadzrat Mahammed Talayha of the Bani Asad tribe had turned away from Islam and proclaimed himself a prophet. Very little is known of his doctrines. His faith seems to have been a mere travesty of Islam. Talayha forbade prostration during prayers, for he said "The Lord hath not commanded that ye should soil your forehead and double up your back in prayer." Once some persons of his tribe while travelling in his company approached him for water, as none of them had any drink. He asked one of them to ride on to a place, a few miles off, predicting that water would be found there. His guess turned out true. This incident, which was ascribed to his miraculous power, increased his influence. The holy prophet had sent Dzirar at the head of a group of Moslems to punish him. It is said that in an encounter between the two, the sword of Dzirar had glanced off from the person of Talayha, giving rise to a rumour that he possessed a charmed life. This was another reason of his influence. Before Dzirar could accomplish his object the holy prophet breathed his last, hence Talayha gained fresh strength. His own tribe, the Bani

Asad flocked round his standard. The defeated Bani Abs and the Bani Zibyan, branches of the great Ghatafan tribe, joined him at Buzakha. Oyayna, a chief of the Bani Fezara another branch of the Ghatafan, advised his tribe to join the Bani Asad. "Let us go back," he said, "to our ancient alliance with them for never since we gave it up have I known the boundaries of our pasture lands.[1] A prophet of our own is better than a prophet of the Koreish. Besides Mohammed is dead, but Talayha is alive." With these words he joined Talayha with 700 warriors at Buzakha. Some branches of the Bani Tay also ranged themselves on his side. Khalid encamped in the country of the Bani Tay and deputed the loyal chief Adi to gain over his tribe. The actual presence of a considerable force and the influence of Hatim's son Adi secured the adhesion of this great tribe. They joined Khalid with 1,000 horse, the pick of their warriors. Being thus reinforced Khalid attacked Talayha at Buzakha. A severe struggle took place, Oyanay fought for some time with unusual courage but when the situation became critical he inquired from Talayha if he got any message from God. Talayha answered, "Thus saith Gabriel to me—Thou shalt have a millstone like unto his, and an affair shall happen that thou

[1] The Bani Ghatafan lost some pasture lands in a quarrel with the Bani Tay and Bani Asad.

wilt not forget." The answer was meaningless and unconvincing. Oyayna at once perceived the imposture of Talayhah and left the field with his followers. Khalid now easily defeated the impostor inflicting severe loss. Escaping towards Syria Talayha settled among the Bani Qodzaa, embraced Islam and obtained pardon and in after years made himself conspicuous in the battle of Qadesia. Many apostates met with death in the struggle but in the end the tribes of Ghatafan and Asad secured full pardon on reversion to Islam; only those who had killed any Moslem were put to death. The Bani Howazin, the Bani Suleym and others paid their tithes and obtained the same terms. The irreconcilables among these tribes with a few chiefs did not surrender forthwith. They flocked round Salma, daughter of a famous Ghatafan chief. She had been taken captive in the lifetime of the Prophet and had served Hadzrat Ayesha as a captive maid but the latter had given her liberty. Mounted on her mother's war camel she led her soldiers and gave battle to Khalid. She lost her life in the engagement and her men were routed, among whom was Oyayna. In this campaign only a few ringleaders were made captives and sent to Medina in chains. The Caliph with his characteristic mildness and clemency forgave them all and set them at liberty.

One Fujaa a chief of the Bani Suleym tribe who had obtained arms from the Caliph in order to fight with the rebels, had abused his trust and plundered friends and foes alike with his band of brigands. Enraged at his treacherous conduct the Caliph ordered him to be burnt to death. Though the sentence was cruel, it may be urged in favour of the Caliph that the provocation had been very great and that the mode of punishment adopted was not unusual in those days. It may also be said to his credit that he afterwards repented for this act.[1]

Subjugation of the Bani Tamim with an account of Sajah.

Having subdued the tribes living in the hills and deserts to the north of Medina, Khalid turned his attention to the tribe of Bani Tamim, who dwelt in the north-east corner of Arabia, near the Persian Gulf. The various clans of this tribe, the believers and the unbelievers ranged themselves on opposite sides according to their faith and began to fight with each other. Amidst this scene of turmoil, appeared Sajah, a strange and mysterious figure, who proclaimed herself a prophetess. At the head of the Bani Tughlib and other Christian tribes, she issued out of Mesopotamia to plunder Medina. Malik, son of Neweira, chief of the clan

[1] In his whole life Hadzrat Abu Bakr repented for two other things, *viz.*, for granting pardon to Ashath and for not sending Omar to Iraq on the transfer of Khalid to Syria.

of Yerbaa entered into an alliance with her, dissuaded her from the intended attack on Medina, and induced her to fight with some hostile clans of the Bani Tamim. When she was twice defeated, in her encounters with the Bani Tamim, Malik deserted her. In this juncture she arrayed her force against the pretender Musaylama who averted a conflict by marrying her and promising to give her half of the revenues of Yamama. Leaving behind some officers to realise her share of the revenues, she retraced her steps towards Mesopotamia as suddenly as she appeared but on the way she came across Khalid who dispersed her followers, but she herself succeeded in reaching her native land. On the departure of Sajah, Malik son of Neweira lost heart and advised his clansmen who had flocked to him at Batah to return to their homes. Hearing a rumour that Malik was making warlike preparations, Khalid marched upon Batah. The Ansar at first declined to follow Khalid in this enterprise, as the Caliph did not authorise it, but on reconsideration, they joined him. Batah was found deserted. Parties were sent out in all directions with instruction to call the people to prayer and to capture them on their failure to respond to the prayer call. Malik and several other men were thus imprisoned and brought to Khalid. The evidence as to their

conduct was conflicting. A few persons stated that they had not responded to the call for prayer, while Catada an Ansar and others deposed to the contrary. Unable to come to a definite conclusion, Khalid commanded that the prisoners should be kept under guard until final orders. To protect them from cold he further instructed Dzirar and his men to "wrap their prisoners." Misunderstanding the last instruction Dzirar put the prisoners to the sword, because in his dialect the phrase "to wrap one's prisoner" meant to kill him. Hearing a noise Khalid came up to see what was the matter but by this time the execution was completed.[1] Almost immediately after Malik's execution, Khalid married his beautiful widow Leila. Shocked at these incidents Catada refused to serve under Khalid. He returned to Medina and charged Khalid with murder. Hadzrat Omar held the same view and tried to convince the Caliph, but there was not sufficient evidence to prove the charge. Khalid thereupon got off scot-free but the Caliph paid the weregild for the victims.

[1] In some accounts it is said that when Malik was brought to Khalid as a captive, he cried out to him, "Thy master never gave command for this." Whereupon Khalid replied, "Then rebel, by thine own admission, he is not thine." Evidently the suggestion contained in this story is that Malik was beheaded for making the above statement, but this account does not appear probable.

Khalid's defeat of Mosaylama who was killed in 11 A.H. in the battle of Acraba.

The most powerful among the pretenders was Musaylama. He was a man of short stature and mean countenance. Once he had waited upon the holy Prophet as a member of a deputation from his own tribe of Bani Hanifa and professed Islam. Returning to his native land he had pretended that Hadzrat Mohammed made him a sharer in his prophetic office. "He aped in childish terms the language of the Koran and established a system of prayers similar to those of Mohammed."[1] He was a consummate conjurer to boot. By his wonderful tricks, which he represented as miracles, he deceived his own people, gathered a large following and even gained over Rajjal, who was sent by the Prophet to counteract his teaching. He further averted a threatened danger by entering into matrimonial alliance with Sajah who had exhibited hostile intentions against him. Hadzrat Abu Bakr sent Ikrima Bin Abu Jahl to crush the pretender and subsequently despatched Shorahbil to his support. Eager not to share the credit of success with any one else, Ikrima made an attack before the arrival of Shorahbil but was repulsed with heavy loss. The Caliph on hearing of the defeat wrote angrily to Ikrima, "I will not see thy face nor shalt thou see mine, now as thou art. Thou shalt not return

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Life of the Prophet.

here to dishearten the people. Depart into the uttermost coast and there join the armies in the east of the land and then in the south." Shorahbil was now instructed to reinforce Khalid, but disregarding the instruction, he gave battle and was defeated. At last Khalid, the sword of God, with only thirteen thousand soldiers was commissioned to put down Musaylama who with forty thousand warriors was encamped at Acraba. A sanguinary battle took place in which the apostates fought for their very existence and the Moslems for their dear faith. Both parties fought with prodigious valor. "Fight for your beloved ones," cried the son of Musaylama; it is the day of jealousy and vengeance; if ye be worsted your maidens will be ravished by the conquerors and your wives dragged to his foul embrace." Animated by the words the apostates fought desperately and pressed back the Moslems. Upbraiding their slackness, Zaid a brother of Omar cried out, "I shall follow them that have gone before; not a word will I utter more till we beat the apostates back or I appear to clear myself before my Lord. Close your eyes,[1] clench your teeth. Forward like men."[2] With these words he

[1] The speeches in this paragraph have been quoted from Sir William Muir's History of the Caliphate.

[2] Eyes had to be closed as at the time a wind was blowing sand towards the Moslems.

pressed a charge and fell down dead. Thabit bin Qais the leader of the Ansar reproached his follow citizens and shouting out, "Woe be to you, because of this backsliding, verily I am clear of ye even as I am clear of these (pointing out the enemy)," he rushed to the charge and perished. Electrified, as it were by these noble examples, the Moslems, led by the brave and skilful Khalid, made a furious charge routing the apostates who took shelter in a garden close by and barred the gates. Boraa, one of the twelve who had sworn to the pledge of Acaba, scaled the wall and fighting his way through the dense mass of enemy opened the gate. The Moslem army rushed in like pent-up water. Though the apostates fought furiously like wild beasts brought to bay, the Moslems slew them almost to a man because they could not properly use their arms obstructed by their very number and the trees in the garden. Khalid now won a glorious victory, but the loss of the Moslems was heavier than that of any previous battle. Over 1,200 noble souls laid their lives in the cause of Islam. The loss of the enemy was appalling. It is said that 14,000 hostile soldiers with their leader Musaylama were killed. The garden came to be known as the "Garden of Death" on account of the fearful carnage. The victory sealed the fate of idolatry in Arabia. The Bani Hanifa again

professed Islam and were admitted as citizens of the Moslem commonwealth.

The Bani Bakr and other branches of the great Bani Rabia lived in Hegir and Bahrein.

Pacification of Hegir and Bahrein by Ala.

Munzir, the Christian chief of Bahrein, had professed Islam and accepted the suzerainty of the Prophet, but he survived the Prophet, only for a short time. On Muzir's death, all the tribes of Bahrein, except the Bani Abdul Qais, who were wisely counselled by their loyal chief Jarud, rebelled. Ala, the representative of the Prophet in Bahrein, left the country on the outbreak of rebellion. The rebels under a chief named Hatem selected a scion of the Hira dynasty as their king, and blockaded the Bani Abdul Qais who were reduced to great straits. Hadzrat Abu Bakr sent Ala at the head of a party of soldiers to crush the rebellion. On his way back to Bahrein, he got reinforcements from the recently pacified tribes of the Bani Hanifa, Bani Tamim and others. While the army was marching across the great waterless desert of Dahana they lost their way in the darkness of night. They had no water with them and the existence of any spring was not known. They were therefore in great anxiety, because the tropical heat of the day without water would spell death; but at dawn a lake of fresh water suddenly appeared in the horizon.

The lake was never seen before or afterwards, so its sudden appearance was regarded as a miracle. With Ala's entry into Bahrein, the blockade of the Bani Abd-al-Qais ceased. The Moslem army was numerically too weak to attack the rebels, so they dug a trench to protect themselves. Thus the contending armies were encamped in front of each other for about a month without any practical result. One night Ala observed that the rebels were carousing. Taking advantage of this confusion, he attacked the rebels from all sides, and routed them. Hatem was killed in the engagement, and the prince of Hira, who was taken prisoner, embraced Islam. The discomfited enemy took shelter in the Islet of Darin, close to the shore and removed all boats. Ala's army prayed to God for help and throwing themselves into the sea on horses and camels, crossed the channel, took the enemy by surprise and put them to the sword. It is said that the sea became miraculously fordable. A rich spoil fell into the hands of the victorious army. Each horseman got 6,000 dirhems for his share. Thus the whole Hegir and Bahrein acknowledged the rule of Ala.

Restoration of order in Oman.

Jeyfar, the prince of Oman had professed Islam and acknowledged the authority of the Prophet. Amr-al Aas had been deputed to his court as a representative of the Prophet. It had been

settled that the tithes from this distant country were not to be brought to Medina, but were to be distributed among the poor of the country. Inspite of the concession, the country rebelled on the death of the Prophet. Laqit, the leader of the rebels, set up as a Prophet in order to strengthen his position. On the outbreak of rebellion Amar-al-Aas fled to Medina and Jeyfar with a small following took shelter in the mountains. Under the command of the Caliph, Huzayfa and Aarfaja, two local converts of influence, assisted by Ikrima and Jeyfar and the Bani Abd-al-Qais and a few other tribes of the recently pacified country of Bahrein, defeated the rebels with great slaughter. The families of the rebels, who were kept behind the fighting line to nerve their courage, fell into the hands of the Moslems as prisoners of war. Huzayfa stayed in Oman as Governor and Jeyfar carried the royal share of the spoil to Medina, while Ikrama proceeded in his victorious career to Mahra, where he restored order in a short time.

Restoration of order in Tihama.

Tihama was in a state of great turmoil. Troops of bandits, the remnant of Aswad's cavalry, under the leadership of Amr bin Maadikarab, a chief of influence and a poet of renown, carried plunder and rapine in Tihama, making the country impassable for the travellers. Tahir, who had been deputed by the Prophet to

exterminate the bandits, did his work so thoroughly that the country again became impassable on account of noxious dead bodies of the bandits lying along the roads.

Restoration of order in Yemen.

In Yemen Qays bin Abd Yaghuth procuring the help of the brigand chief Amr bin Maadikarab, rebelled against Firuz the governor of Saana. Firuz fled but his family was made captive by the rebels. Ere long Firuz with the help of the loyal tribes re-occupied Saana and regained his family, but the rebel chiefs were still at large. The Caliph sent Muhajir at the head of a small force to quell the disturbance. As he passed through Tayef and Najran loyal tribes flocked under his standard. By the time he reached Yemen, a considerable force gathered round him. At the same time Ikrima, who leaving Hadzramaut to his right, was marching with an ever-increasing army to the help of Muhajir, reached Aden. Alarmed at the approach of the two armies, Qays and Amr joined their forces to oppose Muhajir, but they soon quarrelled and after the manner of poets of those days abused each other in verses. In order to procure his safety Amr took to a mean but strange stratagem. He attacked Qays at night and took him prisoner to Muhajir. The latter sent both of them in chains to Medina where Hadzrat Abu Bakr with his usual

clemency granted them pardon on their acceptance of Islam once more. The two chiefs subsequently blotted out the stains on their character by their valorous conduct in the Persian War. After their capture, Yemen was speedily pacified.

Restoration of order in Hadzramaut.

Muhajir and Ikrima now hastened to the help of Ziad who was acting as Governor in Hadzramaut. Here Ashath bin Qays a powerful chief of the Bani Kinda roused the whole country against Ziad. With a flying column Muhajir joined Ziad, fell upon Ashath and defeated him with great slaughter. The routed enemy took shelter in a fort, which was besieged. When Ikrima came up with the main army, troops were sent out to ravage the surrounding country. Witnessing the miseries of their kinsmen, the garrison attempted to force a way out, but failed with severe loss. At last Ashath treacherously surrendered the garrison on condition that the lives of nine prisoners were saved but in a hurry he forgot to include his own name. He was imprisoned and sent in chains to Medina, where the Caliph reproached him for his apostacy, but in pursuance of that policy of clemency which was the natural outcome of his kind nature and which he adopted in dealing with apostacy, he pardoned him in the end on his promise to adhere to

Islam and to conduct himself better in future. He even gave him the hands of his sister. For a while Ashath lived in Medina in idleness and the "Caliph was heard to say that one of the three things that he repented having done during his Caliphate was his weakness in sparing this rebel's life." [1] In after years Ashath retrieved his fame in the wars in Syria and Iraq. With the suppression of rebellion in Hadzramaut, the pacification of Arabia was complete. Ziad continued to govern Hadzramaut while Muhajir shared the government of Yemen with Firuz.

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Life of the Prophet.

CHAPTER XVII.

The War with the Persians.

After the death of Parwiz, Persia was rent with internal discord; disorder prevailed in the outlying provinces; and the once mighty empire became effeminate. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Mothanna Shibani, a chief of the tribe of Bani Bakr, who had taken prominent part in the subjugation of Bahrein and Hegir, with a handful of men sacked the country acknowledging Persian suzerainty round about Hira and Obolla.[1] Subsequently he approached the venerable Caliph Abu Bakr and solicited permission for a systematic attack upon that province. The Moslems had a grievance against the Persians, because their proud monarch Parwiz had torn a letter which the holy Apostle had addressed to him inviting him to embrace Islam Perhaps the memory of the insult and the zeal for the propagation of the faith (not by force but by bringing Islam in contact with heathenism) equally influenced the Caliph in sanctioning an expedition. He ordered Khalid bin Walid to conduct the operations, which

[1] The modern town of Basra was founded near Obolla.

ultimately led to a mortal conflict between the young Moslem commonwealth and the mighty Persian empire.

The battle of the chains 12 A. H.

To the ardent Moslems the chattels of the present world were of no consequence. They lived in the most simple nay abstemious style in spite of vast powers in their hands and immense wealth within their grasp. The cause of religion, which meant the spread of superior morality and civilization, was dearer to them than life itself. But the prospects of rich spoils, captive women and fertile country lost none of their charms with the recently reclaimed Bedouins. They flocked to the thinned ranks of Khalid in his march through Yamama.

When Khalid reached the outskirts of the Delta of the Euphrates, he found himself at the head of 10,000 men. In addition to this force Mothanna with 8,000 men, placed himself at the disposal of Khalid.

The country which the Moslems were now entering was in many respects quite different from that with which they were familiar. "The two great rivers of Mesopotamia, while yet more than 500 miles above the sea, draw close to one another. Below this point the land naturally rich, is easily supplied with water, and when irrigated is exuberantly fertile. Instead of joining where they approach, kept apart and

for the two or three hundred miles, running parallel, inclose what was the memorable plain of Dura. The country (as now) was covered with long hillocks and mounds, the remains of an ancient network of irrigation, and also strewed with fragments of bricks and pottery, remnants of the dim ages of antiquity. At the time of which we write, the face of the land was not, as it is for the most part now, a barren waste, but richly cultivated and irrigated by canals. On the Tigris, a little below the point of its drawing near the Euphrates, was Medain, 'the twain city' (combining the sites of both Seleucia and Ctesiphon) at this time the capital of Persia. Fifty miles to the south of it a series of shapeless mounds looking down on 'the great river' Euphrates marked the site of ancient Babylon and from their summit, still to the south, might be descried the Birs Nimrud (or Tower of Babel) rearing its weird head on the horizon of the verdant plain. Some thirty miles yet further south lay Hira, capital of the Lakhmites and of the Arab tribes around. It stood (like its successor Kufa) upon the Bodacla, a branch which issues from the right bank of the Euphrates by a channel in the live rock, sixteen miles above Babylon, cut by the hand of man but of unknown antiquity. Sweeping to the west of the parent river, the rival stream in its southward course, feeds many marshes and

especially the great lake called the 'Sea of Najaf'; after a wide circuit it rejoins the Euphrates above its junction with the Tigris. There was in olden times another branch still further to the west, the Khandac or 'Trench of Sapor' which intended as a bar to Bedouin incursions, and taking a yet wider circuit fell into the Euphrates near Obolla, at the head of the Persian Gulf. This is now dry but originally it carried a stream which, like the other, helped materially to widen the green belt continually narrowed and pressed in upon by the dry and sandy desert beyond. The lower delta again has features of its own. It is subject to tidal flow for fifty miles above the junction of the two rivers. Alluvial, low, watered with ease, it is covered with a sea of corn, and has, not without reason, been called 'the garden of the world.' Besides the familiar palm, the country abounded with the fig, mulberry and pomegranate. But the climate was close and oppressive; the fens and marshes always liable to inundation, were aggravated by the neglect of dams and sluices in those days of anarchy and the Arab used to the sandy steppes of the Peninsula, gazed wonderingly at the luxuriant growth of reeds and rushes, and at buffaloes driven by the pestiferous insects to hide their unwieldy bodies beneath the water, their heads alone appearing, or splashing lazily through the shallow waste

of endless lagoons. All Chaldea, from the estuary upwards, was cultivated, as now, by Fellaheen, or Arab peasantry and these were lorded over by Dihcans, or Collectors commissioned by the Persian Court. Such was the magnificent province lying between the desert and the mountain range of Persia, the cradle of civilisation and the arts, which attracted the first crusade of the Moslem arms." [1]

The great Moslem general Khalid now summoned Hormuz, the satrap of the Delta, to profess Islam or to pay tribute. Taken a back by this strange but bold demand, Hormuz started in haste to meet Khalid and encamping himself in Hafir took possession of the water spring. Deciding to drive the Persians from the springs, Khalid attacked them, killed Hormuz and defeated his army. The Moslems secured a large quantity of arms and rich spoils, among which was the precious jewelled tiara of Hormuz which was valued at 100,000 dirhems. The battle became known as the "Battle of the Chains" because a considerable number of the Persian soldiers were bound with chains to prevent retreat.

Battle of Walaja, 12 A. H.

Alarmed at the victory of the Moslems, Ardsher, the Persian Emperor, sent a large army under Bahman, an experienced general. A section of the Bani Bakr and other loyal

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Annals of the Early Caliphate.

tribes co-operated with the Persian army. The combined force advanced to Walaja where a fierce struggle took place. The tactics of Khalid won the day, for the Moslems. He placed a detachment of the army in an ambush and began to retreat. When the Persian army passed the ambush, the men in hiding sprang up, attacked the exhausted enemy from behind, routed them and secured many captives. Addressing his victorious soldiers, Khalid said "Ye see the riches of the land. Its paths drop fatness and plenty, so that food is scattered about as stones in Arabia. Were it but as provision for this present life and no holy war to wage, it were worth our while to fight for these fair fields and banish care and penury for ever." But the battle was only the beginning of an arduous campaign. Hard fighting was ahead.

Battle of Allis, Safar of 12 A.H.

The Christian tribes of Mesopotamia were exasperated because two prominent members of the Faith were made captives at Walaja. These tribes now roused the Bedouins on both sides of the Euphrates and also sought the co-operation of the Persian Emperor who gladly sent another army to retrieve his fortune. The combined force assembled at Allis, midway between Hira and Obolla. Menaced by this army, Khalid recrossed the Euphrates, and

posting a strong detachment at Hafir to protect his rear, he advanced to meet the enemy, who offered such obstinate resistance that Khalid vowed to shed a river of blood, in case he was victorious. At last the Persian gave way before the surging and irresistable tide of the Moslem attack and fled in disorder. For two days, the Moslem cavalry scoured about the country and captured a large number of the fugitives, who were slain for the fulfilment of Khalid's dreadful vow, in a dry canal, which gained the appellation of the "River of Blood." At the close of the battle, the Arabs found ready spread in the camp of the enemy a sumptuous meal from which the Persians were drawn away by the surprise attack of Khalid. The simple Arabs ate the delicacies of the Persian table with avidity and childlike delight. A rich spoil and numerous captives including many beautiful matrons and damsels who were lawful to the captors fell into the hands of the Moslems.

The conquest of Hira and the Delta.

Khalid now led his victorious army towards Hira. In the way he secured an immense booty by a sudden attack upon Amghishia, a town which rivalled Hira in wealth and importance. It is said that each horseman got 1,500 dirhems for his share. From here he proceeded in boats, but to check his progress a son of the

Persian satrap opened the irrigating sluices. Thus the channel became dry. With a flying column Khalid attacked the party, slew the satrap's son, and closed the sluices. Now the channel again became navigable. When Khalid reached Hira, the satrap, already low spirited on account of his son's loss, fled in a panic but the city being well-fortified held out for some time. Khalid took possession of the beautiful suburban palaces at Khawarnac and Najaf, and put pressure upon the monks of a monastery which was outside the city walls. The hard-pressed monks induced the citizens to surrender on favourable terms. The citizens agreed to pay an early tribute of 1,90,000 dirhems to which all classes, except women, children, religious mendicants, and decrepit and old persons were to be assessed. They also presented valuable gifts. The Moslems on their part undertook to protect the city from foreign attack and granted self-government, the administration being vested in the hands of the local municipality. Hadzrat Abu Bakr ratified the transaction, but directed that the value of the gifts was to be set off against the demand on account of the tribute. The country round about Hira secured peace on similar terms. Khalid then sent the distinguished lieutenants Mothanna, Qaqaa and three others to subjugate the delta of the Euphrates. He made Hira

his head-quarters for about a year, and set up summary rule in the country round about Hira down to the Persian Gulf and the banks of the lower Tigris. The dehqans or landlords of the country tendered submission and agreed to pay the revenue. Under the wise direction of the Caliph the fellahin or the actual cultivators of the soil were left undisturbed in the possession of their lands on the previous terms, with the addition only of a light poll-tax. The conquest of Hira and the delta of the Euphrates was an unique event. It was the first foreign territory which came into the hands of the Moslems. The usual five public prayers, the outward symbol of Islam, were established in the conquered territory. The streets of Hira daily reverberated with the solemn prayer call.

Conquest of Anbar and Ain Tamar, 12 A. H.

Khalid was not the person to rest satisfied with his achievements, brilliant though they were. Leaving Qaqaa in charge of Hira, he marched upon Anbar, a town on the left bank of the Euphrates about 80 miles above Babylon. The town was protected by a ditch and strong walls. Khalid constructed mounds of earth from the top of which his archers rained a shower of arrows blinding the opponents by hundreds. Further he slew his old and weak camels with the carcasses of which he filled a

portion of the ditch and pressed an attack upon the town. Being reduced to straits Shahrzad, the Persian Governor, sued for terms and was allowed to retire with a few followers. Khalid next turned his attention to Ain Tamar (literally "fountain of dates") a fortified post about three days' march to the west of Anbar. The fortress was garrisoned by a strong Persian army under their governor Mahran. In addition to this force, a large body of Bedouin Arabs under Oqba, a chief of the Bani Tughlib assembled there to co-operate with Mahran. When Khalid came in contact with the enemy, he met with a hot reception, but succeeded in taking Oqba prisoner with his own hand. Taken aback by this incident, Mahran fled in haste, while the followers of Oqba shut themselves up in the citadel, which was besieged by Khalid. Shortly after, the garrison sued for terms but on grounds of expediency Khalid rejected the overtures, reduced the citadel, executed Oqba, beheaded all fighting men and made over the women and children to the soldiers or sold them as slaves. Forty students of the gospel, found in a cloister, were taken as prisoners but their lives were saved. One of these youths became the father of Mohammed, the famous doctor of law and another begot Musa, the conqueror of Spain.

Just after his victories at Ain Tamar, Khalid

received an urgent appeal for help from Ayaz, who was besieging Duma without any success. With a body of picked soldiers, Khalid marched across the desert to Duma. The very news of his approach struck terror into the hearts of the enemy. Okaydar, a chief of Duma, who once before had been defeated and captured by Khalid, proceeded to surrender, as he failed to induce his companions to sue for peace. Okaydar was captured and executed. Khalid attacked Duma from one side and instructed Ayaz to attack it from the opposite direction. Thus hemmed in, the enemy was exterminated almost to a man. The women and children were sold into slavery.

Reduction of Duma.

The Bani Tughlib who were smarting under the execution of their chief Oqba did not fail to take advantage of Khalid's absence. With the aid of the Persians and some hostile Arab tribes they made preparations to regain Hira. On receipt of the news, Khalid hastened back but before his arrival Qaqaa defeated the Persians. Khalid marched to Ain Tamar and nearly destroyed the bitterly hostile Christian tribe of the Bani Tughlib, whom he surprised in a series of brilliant night attacks. As the Bedouins were completely crushed, Khalid crossed the Euphrates and proceeded as far north as Firadz within sight of a Roman outpost. There he

Punishment of the Bani Tughlib and Khalid's pilgrimage.

allowed rest to his army during the month of Ramzan. Being uneasy on account of the close proximity of Khalid, the Romans combined with a neighbouring Persian garrison, secured the co-operation of some Bedouin horse and gave battle to Khalid but they were defeated. No enemy was now in sight. Left to himself he would have attacked Medain the Persian capital, but the injunctions of his master withheld him from such a course. He therefore ordered his army to proceed to Hira by easy marches but he himself lagged behind as if to bring up the rear. With a few followers he set out for Mecca in order to perform the pilgrimage. With extreme audacity, he crossed the desert without a guide, performed the pilgrimage and joined his army again, when it was entering Hira.

Battle of Babylon, XII A. H.

Shortly after these events the exigencies of the war in Syria compelled Hadzrat Abu Bakr to send Khalid to that country with half of the force operating in Iraq and Mesopotamia and to place the remaining half under Mothanna. After Khalid's departure Mothanna made the best disposition of the force under his command and strengthened the lines of defence. About this time a new prince, who ascended the throne of Persia, sent an army 10,000 strong under Hormuz to drive out the Moslems. Nothing

daunted, Mothanna with his small band marched out to meet Hormuz and encamped himself near Babylon. A war-elephant which was at the head of the Persian army threw the ranks of Mothanna into confusion. With a heroic band, Mothanna attacked the huge animal, wounded it in a vital part and brought it to the ground. The Moslems now fought with their usual valour and impetuosity and routed the vastly superior Persian army and pursued them even to the very gates of Medain. But inspite of his victory, Mothanna felt his position insecure. He had to defend an extensive front in a hostile country and had to oppose an empire which was powerful in spite of internal discord. Perhaps he also perceived the feasibility of the conquest of Persia with adequate reinforcement. Under these circumstances he asked for help and pointed out how it could easily be procured by recruitment from the tribes that had apostated but had again returned to the fold of Islam. Shortly after these events he proceeded to Medina in person in order to plead for and secure the necessary force. On reaching the holy city, he found the venerable Abu Bakr on his death-bed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The War with the Romans.[1]

The War with the Romans.

The war with the Romans had its origin in an incident which had taken place in the lifetime of the holy Prophet himself. A Ghassanide prince had been guilty of abetting the murder of a Moslem envoy. To avenge the wrong, the holy Prophet had sent an expedition under Zaid in 8 A.H. but it had been opposed by an overwhelming Roman force at Muta. Zaid had fallen in the ensuing battle but his army had been extricated from the perilous position by the skill and courage of Khalid.

As the expedition had not accomplished its object the Prophet had ordered another expedition under Osama, son of Zaid. Before the expedition had left the camping ground at Jorf, the noble Prophet had breathed his last, but Hadzrat Abu Bakr on assuming the reins of government had ordered the expeditionary force to reassemble and proceed to its destination. Osama had fought

[1] Among historians there is a considerable difference of opinion about the sequence of events in the conquest of Syria and Palestine. Some historians hold that the battle of Ajnadain had taken place before the battle of Yarmuk. There are also different versions about the details of some of the battles.

battles in Belqaa and other places and brought to Medina a considerable number of prisoners and a large quantity of booty. This expedition had had the effect of stirring the tribes inhabiting Syria, who made counter-raids.

These raids led Hadzrat Abu Bakr to send a small force to Tayma on the Syrian border. Contrary to the advice of Hadzrat Aly and Omar, the Caliph conferred the command of the force upon Khalid bin Saaid on account of his importunities and his high position among the companions of the Prophet. He was one of those early converts who had migrated to Abyssinia and had once obtained from the Prophet the governorship of a portion of Najran but had been obliged to leave that country on account of the rebellion that had cropped up on his master's death. On one occasion he had defeated Amr bin Maadi Kerib, the rebel leader, and had spoiled him of the famous sword Samsat inherited from Himayer Kings, but inspite of this success, he did not possess the qualities of a good commander. He was now instructed to encamp at Tayma and to enlist the local Moslems for a holy war. He was not to take the offensive unless attacked. His presence alarmed the Romans, who summoned the Bani Ghassan and other tribes of Syria to oppose him. Khalid marched upon one of these tribes. The enemy dispersed on his approach, but Khalid

advanced forward. Mahan, the Roman commander, came to oppose him, but was defeated with considerable loss. Flushed with the victory, Khalid communicated the news to his master in verses and asked for reinforcement as he was in a hostile country far away from the borders of Arabia. At this time Zul Kulaa with a body of Himayer soldiers and Ikrima with some of the heroic troops who had taken part in the brilliant campaign for the pacification of Southern Arabia came to Medina. They were hurried up to the help of Khalid. Walid bin Oqba, the governor of the Bani Qodzaa was also asked to proceed to the help of Khalid bin Saaid. Amr-al-Aas, who on his return from Bahrein was appointed governor over the Bani Saad and a few other tribes, was at the same time instructed to attack the Romans in Palestine. Though Amr-al-Aas was not a dashing soldier he was a wise counsellor. The venerable Caliph Abu Bakr further sent messengers in different directions for levies. The moment was opportune, because Moslem soldiers were returning to Medina from the south, after the suppression of rebellion and apostasy in that quarter. His call to arms was responded with much enthusiasm and a large army was soon raised. Emboldened by the news of the despatch of reinforcement Khalid gave battle to the Romans without waiting for the arrival of the new

troops. The result was indecisive, but Mahan, the Roman Commander, retreated towards Damascus and decoyed Khalid into that direction. At Marjussafar near Damascus, Mahan barred all the roads of retreat and attacked the Moslem army which was by the time reinforced by the contingents under Zul Kulaa, Ikrama and Walid bin Oqba. By chance Khalid's son fell in the way of the enemy and was killed. Panic-stricken by the news, Khalid bin Saaid with a few followers ran away from the field. Ikrama rallied the Moslem force, took up a strong position near the frontiers of Syria till relief should arrive. Undaunted by the reverse, the aged Caliph pushed on four divisions of army. Amr-al-Aas at the head of one division was already on his way to Palestine. About this time Shorahbil arrived from Iraq with a message from Khalid bin Walid. He was placed in charge of one division and sent to commence hostilities in the valley of the Jordan. A portion of Khalid bin Saaid's discomfited army joined his standard in the course of the march. A third division under Yezid bin Abu Sufian set out to attack Belqaa. Abu Sufian, Suheil and many other Meccan chiefs, who but a few years before had faught against the Prophet, now enlisted themselves with alacrity under the banner of Yezid. Abu Obaida, a companion of high rank but of

mild and generous disposition commanded the fourth division intended for an attack upon Hems. His force was composed of a large number of Medinites and the companions of the Prophet. A fifth division under Muaviya, the second son of Abu Sufian was sent to the help of Yezid. The Bedouins travelled with their family and chattel ready to settle in the happy land of Syria.

Hadzrat Abu Bakr was fully aware of the gravity and responsibility of the policy adopted by him. It meant a trial of strength with the Roman empire while he was already engaged in a deadly struggle with the Persians. Common prudence would have dictated the policy of crushing the enemies by turn, but " these timid maxims of policy were disdained by the magnanimity or enthusiasm of the Arabian Caliphs. With the same vigour and success they invaded the successors of Augustus and those of Artaxerxes; and the rival monarchies at the same instant became the prey of an enemy whom they had been so long accustomed to despise."[1] As each army was ready to march forward, the venerable Caliph walked for a short distance by the side of the mounted commander to show his personal interest and sympathy. His parting advice ran thus :—I have placed you in command

[1] Note (1) Quoted from Gibbon.

over the Moslems, so that I may test you and see how you deal with the Moslems.........Under all circumstances fear God, for your deeds and thoughts are equally apparent to him. He who is nearest to God by his sincere deeds is best and dearest to him. Give up the habits of the days of Ignorance, because God hateth these...... Be brief in your address for prolixity leads to harm. Perform your prayers at the appointed hours.........Don't slay women, children and old men nor those who surrender or profess Islam. Keep your words and stick to your covenants. Go fight in the way of the Lord."

The Moslem generals eventually took up their position in an echelon. Abu Obaida was to the extreme left near Damascus and the scene of the recent disaster. Next came Shorahbil threatening the Ghor or the valley of the Jordan and the Tiberias. Yezid in Belqaa threatened Bostra and Amr-al-Aas in lower Palestine, menaced Hebron. To oppose the generals, Heraclias the Roman emperor sent four large armies. Observing the vast numerical superiority of the Romans,[1] the Moslem generals exchanged views

[1] In describing the Roman army, Gibbon made the following observations -- The army might be indifferently styled either Syrians, Greeks or Romans: Syrians, from the place of their birth or warfare; Greeks, from the religion and language of the sovereign; and Romans from the proud appellation which was still profaned by the successors of Constantine.

among themselves and on the advice of Amr-al-Aas decided to concentrate their forces at a place on the Yarmuk. Understanding the tactics, the Romans on their part drew together their forces and encamped in a plane formed by a loop of the Yarmuk, which falls into the Jordan. Three sides of the plain known as Waqusa were surrounded by the precipitous bank of the river and the fourth side was protected by a ravine. Through a narrow neck on this side a military road gave access to the plain. The Romans considered the place quite secure but the Arabs at once perceived the mistake of the enemy and occupied the position near the mouth of the loop in order to attack the enemy as soon as he dared to issue out of the plain. The Romans did not venture to come out of the death trap in which they were caught. The contending armies thus remained in waiting for two months. Being tired of the delay, Hadzrat Abu Bakr ordered Khalid bin Walid to join the Syrian army with half of the force operating in Iraq. Khalid was to assume the supreme command of the Syrian army, as he was a skilful general and an intrepid soldier, who had already made his mark by subduing the rebels of Arabia and defeating against enormous odds the formidable tribe of Bani Hanifa in the battle of Yamama in which their leader the notorious impostor Musaylama had been killed. He had acquired further reputation by

his brilliant operations in Iraq and justified his title of "Saifullah" or "the Sword of God." On no better shoulders the heavy responsibilities of the invasion of Syria could fall. Khalid's march from Hira to Syria over a pathless and waterless desert was a wonderful feat. Crossing over the sea of sand, he reached Duma, where he halted. From here he could have easily gone to Syria by the usual route, but he feared that the Romans might prevent him from effecting junction with the Moslem army. With awful temerity, he resolved to turn the flank of the Roman army by a perilous journey over a dreary and trackless desert. Being informed by the guide that no water could be had for 5 days in the desert, he exclaimed. "We shall go by that route though it is wild and hazardous for with divine aid nothing is difficult." He ordered his men to give two drinks to their camels. At the end of each march, 10 such animals were slain for a company of 100 soldiers. The water drawn from their bodies was mixed with milk and given to horses. The men got only one draught throughout the day and night. On the fifth day, they reached the spot in the neighbourhood of which water should have been found but no trace of it was visible. Fear of horrible death now stared the whole army in the face. They anxiously searched for a bramble bush by which was a

fountain. Their joy knew no bounds when the bush and a plentiful supply of water were found. Emerging near Tadmor, Khalid reduced the town, defeated some neighbouring tribes, and then joined the Moslem army on the Yarmuk.

On reaching Syria Khalid organised the whole force. He divided the army into squadrons of 1,000 men, each of which was placed under a trusted leader. He then gave necessary directions to the different leaders for the ensuing engagement. By a strange coincidence Mahan, a Roman general, brought reinforcements to the camp of the enemy on the very day in which Khalid joined the Moslem army. Ere long a sanguinary and shocking battle was fought on the banks of the Yarmuk. On the side of the Romans, 240,000 men including a considerable number of Christian Bedouins took the field under Theodoric, a brother of Heraclius. 30,000 soldiers were chained to prevent retreat. Thousands of bishops and monks with crosses were in the front encouraging the army. But on account of religious schisms and haughty temper of the ruling class the Roman army was wanting in solidarity and loyalty. To combat with this vast force the Moslems had only 46,000 souls, but their enthusiasm knew no bounds. They courted victory or death with equal alacrity as the former meant spoils of war, and religious merit, while the latter spelt paradise with all its

indescribable pleasures and blessings. They engaged, in the battle either to conquer or to die; the idea of retreat never crossed their mind. To encourage them, if any encouragement were necessary, persons possessing good voice chanted verses from the holy Koran and recited spirited poems. Even females, among whom was Muaviya's mother, took part in the battle. A Roman general of the name of Jarija, who was persuaded by Khalid to profess Islam, came over to the side of the Moslems in the course of the battle. Mistaking the march of Jarija as a daring attack, the Romans pressed forward with such impetuosity that the Moslem front was broken and thrown into disorder. Ikrima cried out "I, who fought against the Prophet, am not the man to retreat before the infidels. Come ye who will join in the covenant of death." Ikrima's son and the hero Dzirar with 400 persons joined Ikrima in a desperate attack throwing back the Roman battalion. A sickening carnage continued all day long without any decisive result. Towards the evening the enemy began to waver. Observing the Roman cavalry recede from the infantry, Khalid pushed his men in the intervening space and made a spirited attack. The Roman cavalry fled for dear life, while the infantry met death under the swords of the Moslems, or running away from them, fell into the surrounding chasm to perish there. Thus

the Moslems gained a splendid and decisive victory. Khalid took possession of the rich tent of Theodoric. The spoils of war were considerable, the share of each horseman being 1,500 dirhems. It is said that 140,000 Romans lost their lives, while the casualty list of the Moslems consisted of about 3,000 souls among whom were the brave Ikrima [1] and his son. This glorious feat of arms shed lustre on Moslem fame and sealed the fate of southern Syria.

[1] Ikrima was a son of Abu Jahl the most implacable enemy of Islam. He measured sword with the Prophet's army in the memorable field of Bedr, where his father lost his life, took prominent part against the Moslems in the disastrous battle of Ohod, made a daring raid into the Moslem camp in the battle of the Trench and was one of the few to offer resistance to the conquest of Mecca. On the occupation of the city by the prophet he escaped to the seashore with a view to leave the country, but his wife obtained pardon for him, hastened to the coast and brought him back to Mecca. Shortly after the last event he professed Islam and was appointed governor of Najran. Abu Bakr deputed him to crush the rising in Yamama but he was defeated by Musaylama. He soon wiped out the stain of his defeat by his brilliant campaign in suppressing apostasy and rebellion in Oman, Mahra, Yemen and Hadzramaut.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Few Miscellaneous Events.

The Ansar had presented some lands to the Apostle and a Jew of the Bani Nadzir tribe, who had professed Islam and received the merit of martyrdom in the field of Ohod had bequeathed seven gardens to him by his will. Two fortresses of Khaibar with the cultivated fields and orchard lands had also fallen into the hands of the Prophet without the intervention of arms. About the same time, the Jews of Fadak, a village in the vicinity of Khaibar, had surrendered half of their lands and secured peace. The holy Prophet held these and some other lands, from the income of which he would provide the bare necessaries of his family, defray the marriage expenses of the widows of the Bani Hashim and distribute the balance among the poor.

Shortly after the death of the Prophet Hadzrat Fatima sent a messenger[1] to the Caliph requesting him to deliver to her a legal and proper share of the property. The kind-hearted

[1] In some account it is said that Hadzrat Fatima with her husband Aly personally interviewed Hadzrat Abu Bakr.

Caliph, the guiding principle of whose life was strict adherence to the commands of his master, regretted very much his inability to comply with the request, because the holy prophet had declared that his property was for the poor and not for the heirs. He was however willing to provide her with the necessaries of her life out of the income of the estate as was done in the time of the Prophet. This action is severely criticised by some Moslems as illegal and unjust because the holy book gives a share of the property of the deceased to his or her daughter. But the critics forget that the lands were public property temporarily held by the Prophet, and were not his private estate. They further forget the injunction of the Prophet in this respect and lose sight of the generous instincts of the Caliph who would have been too glad to give a share of the property to Ḥadzrat Fatima, if he could have conscientiously done so. The result of the decision was very disastrous and regrettable. Hadzrat Fatima keenly felt the disappointment and ceased to speak with the Caliph. Broken-hearted she followed her noble and illustrious father to the grave within six months of his translation to heaven.

Compilation of the holy Koran.

In the battle of Yamama, a large number of persons who knew the holy Koran by heart, had fallen fighting in the way of the Lord. The calamity led

Hadzrat Omar to think ahead about the preservation of the holy book intact. He drew the attention of Hadzrat Abu Bakr to the subject and persuaded him to order the compilation of the divine revelations in the form of a book. Zaid bin Thabit who had been frequently employed by the Prophet to record the revelations, was selected for the task. With great patience, labour and care Zaid compiled the revelations in the form of a book from writings in leafless branches of the palm tree, broad shoulder-blades, thin stones, scraps of paper and pieces of leather. He also consulted numerous readers and got two verses from Khozayma bin Thabit, which none else knew. The book which was originally with Abu Bakr, passed to Omar and from him to his daughter Hafsa. This precious volume was consulted in the recension of the holy text during the Caliphate of Hadzrat Othaman.

CHAPTER XX

DEATH OF HADZRAT ABU BAKR AND A REVIEW OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

Illness and death of Hadzrat Abu Bakr in Jamad II of 13 A.H. or August 634 A.D.

On account of a bath in a cold day of Jamad II of 13 A. H., Hadzrat Abu Bakr got fever[1] which made him prostrate. He was therefore obliged to ask Omar to conduct the public prayers. Some of his friends desired to call a physician, to which he replied, "He hath been to me already." They then inquired what the physician said. He answered, "He saith to me I am about to do that with thee which I intend to do." The men easily understood that the pious and pure Caliph had divine prescience of his end and kept silent.

Perceiving that his end was drawing nigh he, with characteristic disinterestedness and with the sole object of the public weal, thought of nominating Omar as his successor and consulted Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Talha, Othman, and Aly on the subject. As the nomination received their unanimous support[2] the dying Caliph

[1] In another version of the event, it is said that a Jew poisoned him.

[2] Ibn-ul-Athir says that Talha vehemently opposed the nomination of Omar on account of his severity.

dictated a letter of appointment, which was recorded by Othman. He then desired his wife Asama to raise him in front of the window through which the courtyard of the Great Mosque was visible. Addressing the crowd, who had assembled there, he inquired if they were satisfied with the nomination of a man who was not his kith and kin, and if so, he requested them to obey him. With one voice they cried out "yes." On his death, he desired his daughter Ayesha to make over to his successor a camel and a Nubian slave which were public property and a coarse garment which was purchased out of the meagre personal allowance fixed for him. His last act was to advise Hadzrat Omar to temper justice with mercy.

To the last moment of his life, the venerable Caliph retained consciousness and intelligence. On the day of his death, he granted an interview to Mothanna and grasping the situation correctly, instructed Omar to raise an army with the utmost possible despatch and to push it forward to Iraq. On 21st or 22nd of Jamad II of 13 A. H., at the age of 63 years, Abu Bakr's pure soul soared to heaven with the words—"Lord make me die a true believer. Take me to join the blessed ones on high." He was buried by the side of the Prophet. His head was near the shoulder of his deceased master. No higher tribute could be paid to his blessed memory.

Character of Hadzrat Abu Bakr.

Hadzrat Abu Bakr was one of the most charitable men of his time. He rewarded the worthy, helped the poor and fed the hungry. On the day of his conversion to Islam, he had 40,000 dirhems, but at the time of the Flight, he had only 5,000 left because he had spent the rest in the cause of Islam. With his private means he purchased and liberated seven slaves whom their masters had tormented on account of their faith. For the expedition to Tabuk he voluntarily placed all his fortune at the disposal of the Prophet.

He ate coarse flour, clothed himself in rough garment, kept no guards and led an extremely simple life. He milked his own goats, carried the load of the fatigued, fetched from the market the necessaries of the decrepit and used to sally forth at night to seek for the distressed. "The austere and frugal measure of his life was the effect of habit or virtue and the pride of his simplicity insulted the magnificence of the Kings of the earth."[1]

He was a good interpreter of dreams and his knowledge of the genealogy of the Arabs was vast. He was one of the most learned and eloquent Arabs. He knew the holy Koran by heart and would quote passages from it on appropriate occasions. His sermons were solemn and instructive.

[1] Quoted from Gibbon with necessary changes.

On several occasions he walked on foot by the side of his mounted generals exhorting them to stick to truth, to fulfil promises, to spare the lives of old men, women and children and to forbear from wanton destruction of trees and cattle. He gave the tithes to the poor or spent them for military purposes. The revenues of the state including the spoils of war were distributed on the day of their receipt or on the following day, in equal shares among all the believers whether male or female, bond or free. When urged to give preference to the early converts in the distribution of the revenues, he set his face strongly at the proposal remarking that that was a point for the Lord to decide in the world to come. On his death one solitary gold piece, which must have slipped out of a bag, was found in the treasury. The people wept at the sight and blessed the memory of the Caliph, who was so just and prompt in the distribution of the revenues. He granted general amnesty to all who returned to the faith. He had given certain property to Ayesha, the dearest of all his children. On his deathbed his conscience smote him for this act. He desired her to surrender the property so that all his children might share it and absolve him of partiality. His unswerving loyalty to his deceased master, led him to send Osama with an expeditionary force, though Medina was at

the time in imminent danger of an attack by the apostates. In this juncture some tribes asked for a remission of the poor rate. Even a man of the iron will of Omar thought it expedient to pacify the tribes by some concession, but Abu Bakr knew no compromise in religion. He sternly rejected the proposal and expressed his desire to fight. In short he was simple, wise, unselfish and kind, but at the same time firm. His strength lay in his strict adherence to the precepts and examples of his master. During his brief rule of two years and three months, the aged Caliph not only subdued the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, but carried the Moslem arms to Hira and the delta of the Euphrates and Tigris and sealed the fate of Palestine and Southern Syria by the splendid victory gained on the banks of the Yarmuk. Excluding the Prophet there is none to whom the faith is as much beholden as to Abu Bakr. He had no thought of personal aggrandisement. Endowed with unlimited power he used it simply for the interest of Islam and the good of the people. To his disinterestedness we owe the succession of Omar the greatest of all the Caliphs and the founder of the Moslem empire. But for his firmness and wisdom Islam would have died almost in the throes of its birth. May eternal peace be on his soul.

HADZRAT OMAR

CHAPTER XXI

A General Sketch of the Life of Hadzrat Omar

Birth of Hadzrat Omar; 582 A.D. and his physical features.

The great and illustrious Hadzrat Omar occupies a very prominent place not only in the annals of Islam but in the whole history of the human race. He was born 40 years before the Hegira that is in 582 A.D. His father Khittab was a descendant of Kaab, the common ancestor of the holy prophet Mohammed and the first Caliph Hadzrat Abu Bakr. Both the Prophet and Hadzrat Omar were the ninth descendants of Kaab, who was a great grandson of Fihr, the Koreish. Murra and Adi were the two sons of Kaab, Hadzrat Mohammed traced his origin from Murra and Hadzrat Omar from Adi. It will thus be seen that the noblest Arabian blood flowed in his veins. The Prophet gave him the title of Al-Faruq, that is, one who discriminates between right and wrong.

Hadzrat Omar was tall in stature. Among a crowd of thousands, his figure would be the most prominent. He wore thick beard and had long moustaches. The front portion of his head was bald and his complexion was medium which generally bore patches.

His character and education.

Nature endowed him with intelligence, sound judgment, firmness of character, a good memory and a stern sense of duty. The story of his life, as told in these pages, will illustrate to what degree he possessed these qualities. He could recite from his memory a large number of verses and would frequently quote appropriate ones in giving his opinion on different subjects. His habits were simple but his temper was fiery. Very little is known of his early life. In his youth he had to do some of the rough works which members of even highly respectable families of the time had to perform. He tended his father's camels throughout the whole day in a field about 10 miles from Mecca. His father used to chastise him if he took rest for a while on account of fatigue. Once during the palmy days of his Caliphate he had occasion to pass through the field at the sight of which, he burst into tears with the observation that there was a time when he had to tend the camels of his father at the place but at that particular moment he was the supreme lord of all he saw and had none above

him except his God. The Koreish assigned the function of Sufarat or envoyship to Adi which his descendants continued to hold. For the due discharge of the duties of an envoy, the members of the family had to practise oratory and acquire a knowledge of the genealogy of the different families of Arabia. In this way Hadzrat Omar became well versed in genealogy and gained proficiency in oratory. In accordance with the educational system of the age and the country, he learnt riding and wrestling. In the latter art he acquired so much proficiency that, in the famous fair at Okaz, where none but masters of an art were allowed to compete, he used to enter the lists in wrestling. He had a taste for poetry and Zoheyr was his favourite author. He was one of the seventy men of his time who could write among the whole Koreish tribe. Some of his wise sayings are given below :—

1. He who conceals his secret, keeps his power in his own hand.

2. Do not keep to-day's work for the morrow.

3. The thing which goes backward, never comes forward.

4. Forget yourself in the thought for others.

5 Acquire a few things of the world, so that you may live freely.

6. To give up sins is easier than the pain of repentance.

His profession.

Like most Arabs of the time he took to trade for his livelihood and travelled in distant countries for the purpose. In his travels he lost no opportunity of visiting great men and in the school of his profession, he gained experience and business habits which stood him in good stead in his future great career.

His conversion to Islam.

It must have been Hadzrat Omar's signs of greatness which frequently led our holy Apostle to pray for the conversion of either Omar or Abu Jahal to Islam. The prayer bore fruit and Hadzrat Omar soon embraced the faith. The story of his conversion is a dramatic one. Being an inveterate enemy of Islam, he used to maltreat those over whom he had any power, in order to compel them to renounce their religion. But he soon found his attempts quite futile, as converts to Islam were firm in their faith and no kind of ill—treatment could dissuade them from the true path. Being thus baffled in his attempts, he resolved to murder the holy Apostle himself in order to check the spread of Islam. With this nefarious object he armed himself with a sword and set out in search of the Apostle. In the way a certain person, who guessed his abominable purpose, remarked that Omar should first take care of his sister Fatima and her husband Sayd both of whom had embraced Islam. Impressed

by this observation, Omar turned his steps to the house of his sister, who was then engaged in reading the holy Koran. Perceiving a sound Fatima had scarcely time enough to keep aside her holy Koran when Omar appeared before her. He asked her what she had been reading but she replied in the negative. Thereupon Omar said that both she and her husband had renounced the faith of their ancestors and began to assault Sayd. Fatima came to the rescue of her husband but she too was attacked and blood began to flow from her injured body. In her excitement she avowed her faith in Islam and asserted that she could on no account give it up. These words had a softening influence on Omar, who turned to his sister with kindness and seeing her injured condition was greatly moved. He asked her to read what she had been reading. At this request she brought her sacred Koran which Omar took up and found the sentence—"All things in heaven and on earth praise God and He is omnipotent and omniscient." Every word of the passage had a magnetic influence over him and when he came to the sentence "they believe in God and His Apostle," he involuntarily avowed his faith and proceeded straight to the holy Apostle and formally embraced Islam in the 6th year of the ministry.[1]

[1] There are other versions of the story. Ibn Khuldun says that Omar severely assaulted his sister Fatima on account of her Islam.

Accession of strength to Islam on account of Hadzrat Omar's conversion.

Hadzrat Omar's conversion was a source of great strength to Islam. Hitherto Moslems used to perform their religious duties in private but Hadzrat Omar persuaded them to offer their prayers publicly in the temple of Kaaba and none dared to molest them. The increase in the number of converts to Islam excited greater malice on the part of the Koreish who planned systematic persecution of the Moslems. The holy Apostle therefore instructed his followers to go to Medina where many prominent citizens had embraced Islam. Hadzrat Omar accordingly left for Medina and took up his quarters in Qoba otherwise known as Awali which is about 2 or 3 miles from Medina. Subsequently the Apostle himself migrated to Medina in 622 A. D.

Some events in the life of Omar.

From the time of his conversion to the death of the Apostle in 632 A. D. Hadzrat Omar took a prominent part in all important deliberations and battles. In accordance with his views the practice of "Azan" or "prayer call" was prescribed by the

Hearing the noise Khabbab bin Arit came out and lectured Omar who being softened requested Khabbab to read a few verses of the holy work. Khabbab read out Sura i Ta Ha. It made a wonderful impression upon Omar, who desired to profess Islam and was taken to the Prophet for the purpose Ibn Ishaq gives another version. The story given in the text will be found in Moulana Shibli's Al-Faruq. Almost a similar story is to be found in As-suyuti.

holy Apostle. He took part in the battle of Bedr and when victory declared itself for the Moslems, he pressed for the execution of the prisoners, though they were the kinsmen of the victors. It is true that his stern advice did not commend itself to the divine Apostle, but the incident shows the severity of his character. It was this very trait in his character that led him in 6 A. H. to argue against the conclusion of peace at Hodayba on terms which were more favourable to the non-Moslems. In spite of his severity Hadzrat Omar possessed charitable instincts. He assigned the garden of Thamagh (which fell in his share in the division of the lands of Khaybar) for charitable purposes. This was really the first waqf or endowment in the history of Islam. In 9 A. H., he gave half of his wealth in aid of the expedition to Tabuk.

A few anecdotes illustrative of the character of Hadzrat Omar.

The great Caliph Omar possessed a high sense of honour and integrity. In the distribution of state patronage he did not show the least favour to his kinsmen but on the contrary he practically ostracised them from public offices. He granted to Osama bin Zaid higher salary than to his own son Abdullah, who objected to the arrangement, saying that he was never behind Osama in any battlefield. To this the Caliph replied that

Osama had been dearer to the holy Prophet. On another occasion, when spoils of war arrived in Medina, his daughter Hadzrat Hafsa approached him and asked for her share in it, on the ground that she was a near relative. The Caliph replied, "O my darling, your share is in my personal property and not in the spoils of war; please do not try to dupe me." On hearing this she felt ashamed and retired Once his wife Umm Kulthum presented some bottles of scent to the Roman empress, who sent them back filled with precious stones as counter-present. At the request of Hadzrat Omar she had to deliver them to the public treasury, because the messenger carrying them was paid by the state. One day some persons prescribed honey fcr his ailments. The stuff was in the state store room, but he did not touch it without the permission of the public. His only share from the public treasury was 5,000 dirhems (about Rs. 1,000) a year, which he received in common with all the persons who took part in the battle of Bedr.

The just and stern Caliph invariably punished the wrong-doer without any regard to his station in life. For drunkenness, he inflicted the legal punishment of 80 stripes, on his son Abu Shahma, who succumbed to his injuries. On a certain occasion, he publicly punished a son of Amr-al-Aas, the conqueror and

governor of Egypt for wantonly assaulting a Copt. For some reason or other, he removed from office the greatest generals Khalid and Mothanna but they did not dare to disobey the orders. Verily it was said that the stick of Omar was mightier than the sword.

In one of his nocturnal rounds, he saw a woman surrounded by several weeping children. On enquiry, he learnt that the little ones had no food for many hours. He at once turned to Medina and asked his slave Aslam to put on his back sufficient quantity of eatables which was taken to the woman. Aslam volunteered to carry the load, but the pious Caliph refused the offer, saying that Aslam would not bear his burden in the day of judgment. On another date, he heard the cries of a woman in a tent who was restless on account of pangs of child-birth. Taking pity on her, he immediately went home and brought his wife to attend on the woman. One night he repaired to the house of Abdur Rahman bin Auf and requested him to accompany him to a place outside the town. Here a company of strangers were encamped and they both passed the night in guarding their property. Once Belal, Ammar and a few other liberated slaves came along with Abu Sufian and other Koreishite chiefs to see Hadzrat Omar. But to the chagrin of the chiefs, the Caliph granted interviews to the

slaves first, because of their priority in faith.

Omar's simple mode of living.

He lived a very simple life, his clothes often bore patches, and his diet was of the simplest kind; ordinary bread and olive oil was his usual food but occasionally he had vineger, milk and meat on his table. Once he could not come out of his house for several hours to receive visitors, as his only wearing apparel was being washed.

Omar's wives and children.

His descent on his father's side has been stated before. His mother was a daughter of Hisham bin Mughira. She was thus a sister of Abu Jahal and a cousin of Khalid bin Walid. He had married three wives before his conversion to Islam but divorced two of them for their refusal to profess the new faith. After his conversion, he married one wife, while still in Mecca. At Medina he married two other wives one of whom was Umm Kulthum, a daughter of Hadzrat Aly. He had to pay a dower of forty thousand dirhem or about rupees eight thousand for the hands of the last-named lady. He had several children, but Abdullah the eldest child was the most famous of all. This son was one of the early converts who had taken part in most of the battles waged by the prophet. Abdullah is also well-known for his knowledge of Fiqah

(or the Muhammedan law). His name is frequently mentioned in books of Hadith (or traditions from the Prophet) because a large number of such traditions have come down from him.

CHAPTER XXII

THE WAR WITH THE PERSIANS.

On his succession to the Caliphate, Hadzrat Omar had to grapple with an onerous duty. He had to find men and money for an army to be sent to Mothanna. Fortunately for Islam, a large number of men came to Medina to swear fealty to him. He took advantage of this opportunity to preach a holy war; but his efforts bore no fruit for two days, as most men believed that it was impossible to fight with the Persian hordes, without the renowned general Khalid. On the third day his fervent appeal moved the audience. Abu Obaid, a brave soldier of the tribe of Thaqif, volunteered his services for the undertaking. The contagion spread with the rapidity of electricity and many came forward to enlist themselves. Hadzrat Omar conferred on Abu Obaid the command of the force, but the selection did not give satisfaction to many soldiers, because among them were many Ashab (that is, companions of the Prophet) who on account of their respectability were entitled to the command. Hadzrat Omar however was not the man to alter his decision, because Abu Obaid

by his courage had earned the command, but he instructed the general to respect the Ashab and to seek their advice.

About this time Buran, a royal lady, ascended the throne of Persia with the powerful help of the famous general Rustam. This vigorous and powerful general invited the land-holders against the Moslems, and sent an army under Jaban to cross the Euphrates and retake Hira. He further directed another army under Narsy to occupy Kaskar between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Thus Mesopotamia with the Swad and the Delta threw off Moslem rule.

Mothanna, after an absence of one month, joined his force at Hira and collected together all his men in face of the threatened danger. But as the force at his disposal was too insignificant against the Persian hordes, he retreated from Hira and encamped himself on the desert road to Medina in expectation of the arrival of the army under Abu Obaid. In its march this army was swelled by volunteers from the apostate tribes, who were now declared eligible for military service.

Battles of Nimaraq and Kaskar or Saqatia.

When Abu Obaid with his army reached the camp of Mothanna, he assumed command of the combined force and defeated the Persians under Jaban at Nimaraq. Crossing the Euphrates, he turned towards Kaskar where the

Persian general Narsy was encamped with a large army. The two opposing forces met at Saqatia where the Persians were again discomfited. A large store of a rare kind of date, reserved for the consumption of the emperors, fell into the hands of the conquerors. With the royal fifth of the spoils, a quantity of the date was sent for the inspection of the Caliph. Abu Obaid now sent parties of soldiers to drive out the Persians from the places where they took shelter. Two chiefs named Furrakh and Farwandad tendered their submission and in token of their sincerity sent dishes of delicious food to Abu Obaid who declined to accept the presents (which were meant for him alone and not the whole army) with the observation that absolute equality prevailed among the Moslems and he was by no means entitled to a preferential treatment. On receipt of a further supply of the delicacies, he sat with the rank and file of his army to partake of the same. Needless to say that his magnanimous act rendered him immensely popular with his army. Now the Delta again acknowledged the sway of the Moslems.

Battle of the Bridge in Ramzan of 13 A. H. or 634 A. D.

The news of the defeat at Saqatia led the Persian general Rustam to send a well-equipped force under the command of Bahman who heartily hated the Moslems. Flying the imperial banner, made of panther's skin and supposed to

be very auspicious, Bahman marched with 30,000 soldiers and encamped himself on the bank of the Euphrates not far from Babylon. From here he sent a message to Abu Obaid, who was on the opposite bank, giving him the option of taking battle on either side of the river. The ground on the hostile side of the river was highly disadvantageous to the Moslems, but in spite of the counsels of Mothanna, Abu Obaid's brave and impetuous nature and sense of honour did not allow him to ask the Persians to come over to his side of the river. He himself crossed the Euphrates with his army by a bridge of boats and gave battle but the field was not spacious enough to enable him to manœuvre. Over and above this difficutly, the Persians made use of good many huge elephants, the strange appearance of which frightened the Arab horses. Finding it impossible to check the progress of the elephants, Abu Obaid jumped down from his horse and asked his men to cut down the girths of the animals in order to bring down the howdahs with the riders. Nevertheless the animals marched on trampling down the Moslem soldiery. Abu Obaid now attacked the biggest elephant with his sword and cut clear its trunk, but the enraged beast advanced and trampled him down. His brother Hakam took up the standard but he too was trampled to death. At last Mothanna assumed the command, but by

this time the Moslem soldiers being demoralised were running away from the field. To stop the flight some one cut asunder the bridge of boats, but the soldiers were panic-stricken and many of them jumped down into the river and were drowned. Mothanna encouraged his soldiers and had the bridge repaired. With a handful of men, among whom was a Christian chief of the Bani Tay, he fought hard to cover the retreat of the remnant of his army, though he himself was badly wounded in the enterprise. When the soldiers rallied on the other side of the river only 3,000 men out of a total of 9,000 were found. About two thousand men fled to their homes in Arabia and the rest perished. In spite of the sympathies of Hadzrat Omar, the deserters used to weep and confine themselves to their houses on account of shame. Fortunately for the Moslems, Bahman could not pursue the routed army, because he had to hasten back to Madain, on account of a revolt there. This disastrous battle, known as the Battle of the Bridge, took place in the month of Ramzan in 13 A. H., that is, 643 A. D.

Battle of Buweib in 13 A.H. or 634 A.D.

With the small force under him, Mothanna fell back upon Allis and with characteristic zeal and tact collected a large force in the adjoining districts. On account of his liberal views, influence and popularity, even the

Christians of the Bani Namr tribe flocked under his banner. The news of the disaster, instead of paralysing Hadzrat Omar, made him more resolute. He re-doubled his activity and sent messengers to the various tribes of Arabia, calling upon them to join in the war. In response to this call of duty, men swarmed from all sides. Even some of the deserters from Abu Obaid's army joined the force to retrieve their tarnished fame. Hearing that a Persian force was marching on him, Mothanna proceeded to Buweib near the future site of Kufa and sent a messenger to the Caliph for hurrying on reinforcement. Purandokht, the Persian monarch, sent a large army under Mohran, who was educated in Arabia, in the hope that such a man would be the best person to defeat the tactics of the Arabs. To guard against a disaster of the kind which overtook Abu Obaid, Mothanna had instruction not to cross the river. He therefore allowed Mohran to defile over the bridge unmolested. Before the commencement of the action Mothanna rode on his favourite horse from one end of his line to the other exhorting his soldiers to keep quiet like the dead, until the enemy came within striking distance and then to make the day memorable by their valour. They were not to turn their backs on the enemy on any account. The Persian hordes commenced the attack with all the

strength of their numerical superiority. Under the heavy pressure, a portion of the Moslem army gave way. Mothanna sent words to them not to disgrace Islam by their conduct. Encouraged by the message they reformed and proceeded again to the charge to the great delight of their commander. The battle raged long without any decisive result. Perceiving the necessity of a violent shock, Mothanna with the Christian tribe, the Bani Namr, made an impetuous and irresistible charge breaking the Persian centre. Now the enemy was found to be in full retreat towards the bridge for crossing to the other bank of the river, but Mothanna reached the spot earlier and destroyed the bridge. Thus cornered, the enemy turned back and engaged in a deadly fight. A Christian soldier of the tribe of the Bani Tughlib killed the Persian general Mohran and this event sealed the fate of the battle. The carnage among the defeated enemy was appalling. Heaps of human bone near Kufa bore testimony to future generations of the immense loss of life in the memorable battle field. The loss of the Moslems, though comparatively much less, was still considerable. Among the mortally wounded were Masud, brother of Mothanna and Amr, a Christian chief. Mothanna nursed both of them most tenderly to their last moments. Large stores of grain and herds of cattle fell into the hands of the victors. Moslem soldiers now

scoured the country from Anbar to the Persian Gulf. They proceeded as far as Tekrit on the Tigris and even Sabat, opposite Madain, was not safe from their pillage. Lower Mesopotamia and with it the Swad and the Delta again came under Moslem sway. One day Amr bin Maady Karib with a small column of soldiers convoyed a portion of the booty to the desert where the wives and children of the Moslem combatants were encamped for the sake of safety. Mistaking them for a party of marauders, the brave women attacked them with stones and staves. Amr explained his mission and praised their courage.

Battle of Qadisya, Moharram of 14 A. H. 635 A.D.

The signal victory of the Arabs opened the eyes of the Persians, who now began to put their house in order. Purandokht was deposed, and Yezdjard, the sole male representative of the Chosroes, was placed on the throne The pressure of public opinion obliged Rustam and Firuz, the two most powerful men in the empire, to make up their difference. The army was reorganised and made efficient. The forts were repaired and strengthened. A new life vibrated throughout the empire. As a sequel to these preparations, rebellion spread in Iraq and the province passed out of the hands of the Moslems. On receipt of the news, Hadzrat Omar instructed Mothanna to retreat towards the Arabian frontier and to concentrate his forces there. He was

also to enlist the local tribes under his standard. The Caliph, on his part, forthwith despatched messengers in all directions commanding the different tribes to assemble at Medina with all available men, who would be of any use in the coming encounter. Returning to Medina from the annual pilgrimage, he was delighted to see a considerable number of men assembled in the camping ground at Jorf. He expressed the desire of leading the army in person and as a matter of fact proceeded one march. The noble example created great enthusiasm and many more joined the army. He was however dissuaded from going to the front, because his presence in Medina was much more necessary for the cause he had at heart. As most of the experienced and efficient generals were engaged in the war with the Romans, there was some difficulty in procuring a capable leader for the important enterprise now to be undertaken. The command was offered to Hadzrat Aly, but he declined the honour. Men began to rack their brains to suggest another name. Opportunely the name of Saad bin Abi Waqqas occurred to Abdur Rahman bin Auf. The nomination was approved by the crowd with acclamation and the Caliph accepted it. Saad had embraced Islam while young, but now he was about 40 years old. Though dark-looking and short statured, he was a brave soldier and the first Moslem to draw

blood. Being a nephew of the mother of the holy Apostle he held a high social position.

Saad started at the head of 4,000 soldiers, but Hadzrat Omar hurried on the levies, as they arrived at Medina. In this way the army of Saad swelled and at Sharaf, he found 20,000 men under his banner. Ultimately the number increased to 30,000, when the contingent of Iraq joined him. Tolayha, who had once claimed prophetic mission but now a true believer, and Amr-bin-Maady Karib, who had apostated but had received pardon on tendering allegiance, led their respective clans. Personally each of them was worth one thousand men. Ashath-bin Qays, the once apostate Kinda chief, was at the head of a contingent from Yemen. Every warrior, poet and orator and every man possessing horse or weapons were gradually sent to the front.

On account of the momentous issue invloved, Hadzrat Omar took particular interest in the campaign. He indicated the route and the halting places for the march and gave directions for the disposition of the army. He also used to send out instructions to Saad at frequent intervals. On reaching Thalaba, which was at a distance of only 3 marches from Kufa, Saad halted for three months, because he was not to cross the Euphrates until the enemy behind him was crushed. His next march was to Sharaf, which

is about 20 miles to the south of Hira. About this time the great general Mothanna, who was encamping at Ziqar with 8,000 men, breathed his last, from the effect of the wounds received at the battle of the Bridge, where he had made a heroic stand to cover the retreat of the Moslem army. Except Khalid he was second to none of the Moslem generals. Indeed he lacked the dash and brilliancy of that famous general, but he equalled him in vigour and tactics and had none of his vices. He fought solely for Islam, and his loyalty did not abate in the least in spite of supercession on different occasions. His brother Muanna met Saad at Sharaf and communicated to him the message of Mothanna that the Moslems should take their ground on the skirts of the desert, so that they might push on in case of victory or retreat safely in case of reverse. Saad was impressed by the wise counsel. He regretted sincerely the death of the brave and skilful general, and to mark his respect for the deceased, he married his widow Salma. At the instance of the Caliph, Saad now moved on to the extensive plain of Qadisya, about 35 miles from Kufa. Here he had the Euphrates in his front and the Khandaq at the rear. His right rested on some marshes and his left was protected by a canal and the sea of Najaf. A road running through the plain crossed the Euphrates by a

bridge of boats and led to Madain. At this place Saad waited patiently for the enemy. Here he received instructions to invite Yezdjard to Islam, before hostility commenced. Accordingly a convoy of 13 persons went to Madain and aksed the Persian Emperor to embrace Islam on the enjoyment of equal rights or to pay Jizia, a poll tax, in lieu of the protection to be afforded by the Arabs. As the terms were not acceptable to the Persians the peace negotiations fell through.

The Persian army under the command of Rustam was encamped at Sabat. In spite of the orders of Yezdjard, Rustam avoided a battle because on tactical grounds he did not think it proper to cross the Euphrates. The Arabs were in the meantime raiding the surrounding districts for provision ; hence the sufferings of the people knew no bounds. They flocked to Yezdjard and submitted to him that they would have to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Arabs, unless they received imperial protection. Rustam had therefore to leave Sabat with his army and to take his position opposite Qadisya. A canal separated the two forces. One night Tulayha, the quondam prophet, repaired to the tent of Rustam alone, cut down the ropes of a tent and carried off three horses. He was pursued by three formidable warriors, but he killed two of them and brought the third as prisoner.

Such was the daring spirit of the Arabs of the time Perhaps incidents like these led Rustam to make another effort to conclude peace. He requested Saad to send an envoy. At first Rabia was sent and then Mughira. On the last occasion, the Persians held a magnificent durbar. The officers dressed themselves gorgeously and wore gold caps. The tents were elaborately decorated and carpeted with costly silk cloths and orderlies stood in two rows. Mughira got down from his horse and went straight to the most prominent place of the durbar and sat on the throne by the side of Rustam. Every body was annoyed at his conduct and orderlies removed him from the throne. Addressing the assembly Mughira said "I am a guest and should not be treated in this fashion. The Arabs unlike the Persians do not worship man; among us all men are equal." When business commenced, Rustam tried to impress upon Mughira the foolhardiness of the Arabs in trying their strength against the mighty and vast Persian empire and ended in offering them some money, if they withdrew their forces. These terms were not acceptable because the only terms, Moslems would consider were "Islam, Jizia, or the sword." Mughira therefore left the Persian camp. All hopes of peace now came to an end and Rustam had no alternative but to give battle. The Persians were about 1,00,000

strong while the Moslem force numbered about 30,000. In addition to their numerical superiority the Persians had about 30 huge elephants which gave them enormous odds against the Arabs. Protecting himself with double armour and bearing all sorts of weapons Rustam led the battle in person. He arranged his forces in 13 lines and behind the centre and the two wings placed the elephants.

On account of a neuralgic pain Saad, the Moslem general, could not take part in the actual fighting, but conducted the operations by issuing instructions from the terrace of a building which was in the field. Moslem orators and poets by their stirring speeches and musical songs began to excite and encourage the soldiers. Inflammatory verses from Sura-i-Jehad were read in appropriate voice and exploits of Bedr were recounted. The temper of the army was thus raised to the highest pitch for rushing to a deadly struggle. A Persian archer of fame wearing gold belt and gold bangles came out to the field and in accordance with the custom of the age challenged any Moslem to a duel. Amr-bin Maady Karib proceeded to meet him. The arrow of the Persian missed Amr by the breadth of a hair. Amr spurred his horse, approached the Persian, threw him down, cut his head and stripped him of his bracelets and jewelled girdle. Other single combats followed and then a

fierce general engagement ensued. Throughout the whole day the opposing forces fought with superhuman courage and unparalleled zeal. The huge elephants with howdahs manned by warriors swayed to and fro like moving castles, carrying death and consternation. Arab horses, frightened by the strange appearance of elephants, dispersed. The brunt of the attack fell upon the Bani Bajela, who began to retreat. To divert the attack from the tribe, Saad ordered the Bani Asad to their rescue. Led by their brave chief Tolayha, the heroic band drew the attack upon themselves and lost four hundred brave souls. The elephants were now directed against the two wings, carrying death and disorder. Taking advantage of the confusion, the enemy pressed forward. The situation was now critical. Saad commanded Asim, the chief of the Bani Tamim, to save the day. Collecting a body of dexterous archers and swift warriors, Asim picked off the men on the elephants and cut the girths of the animals. The howdahs fell down and the animals fled as there were no riders to guide them. The Moslems regained their ground and on the approach of night both parties repaired to their respective camps. This day of the battle is known as Armath. At the most critical stage of the battle Saad's wife Salmi sighed for Mothanna insinuating that her husband should have been in the midst of the fight in

spite of his illness. Enraged at the insinuation Saad slapped her, on which she exclaimed, "jealousy and cowardice."

Before the battle began in the next morning Saad buried the corpses of the previous day and entrusted to the women the task of nursing the wounded. Fortunately for the Moslems, on the eve of the second day's battle, Qaqaa-bin-Amru, came up with a portion of the army which had been sent to Syria under Khalid, but was now under orders to join Saad. This brave and skilful soldier divided the force under him in groups of hundred and instructed them to follow each other at short intervals. Coming at the head of the first group, he entered the battle field with the cry of "Allaho akbar" or "God is great." The cry was taken up by the whole army and the plain resounded with the Moslem battle cry of "Allaho akbar." Saluting Saad and communicating to him the happy news of coming succour, he advanced towards the Persian line, and challenged any foe to a single combat. Bahman, the Persian hero of the battle of the Bridge, advanced to meet Qaqaa. Exclaiming that he would avenge the death of Abu Obaid and his comrades, Qaqaa rushed at Bahman and threw him lifeless on the ground. A general engagement now commenced. Qaqaa's bands began to arrive one after another, at short intervals, with the cry of "Allaho akbar" and each time

Moslem army took up the cry. This novel tactics depressed the enemy, because he got an exaggerated notion of the reinforcement, but encouraged the Moslems. To match the Persian elephants, Qaqaa Tamimi put veils on the camels, making them hideous. At this strange appearance of the camels the Persian horse took fright and dispersed. A bloody struggle took place in which both parties warred with marvellous courage. Khansa, the famous poetess, harangued her four sons to fight to death and not disgrace their parents. Abu Mihjan Thaqfy, a brave soldier and a renowned poet, happened to serve out a term of imprisonment for drunkenness at the time when the battle was raging furiously. He fervently implored Salmi to release him, so that he might take part in the engagement. Moved by the appeal, she not only gave him his liberty but presented him one of her husband's horses on condition of his return to prison after the battle was over. He fought so valiantly that wherever he made an attack the lines of the enemy broke. Ignorant of his presence, many men took him to be Khaja Khizir, the precursor of divine help. His extraordinary bravery secured for him an unconditional release but he voluntarily vowed not to touch wine again. In this day's engagement 1000 Moslems and 10,000 Persians lost their lives. In spite of the heavy loss of the enemy, and

unprecedented valour shown by the Moslems, the result was not decisive. This the second day of the battle came to be known as Aghwath probably on account of the help that came from Syria.

In the morning of the third day, known as Ghimath, the Moslems as usual sent away their dead to be buried and their wounded to be nursed by the women and children in the rear. On account of their heavy loss, the spirit of the Persians was low, but their hopes were centred in the elephants. Yezdjard, who was alive to the gravity of the situation, kept himself informed of the changing fortunes of the battle, by means of messengers posted within earshot of each other all the way from Madain to Qadisya. He also sent a portion of his own body guard to take part in the action. As the two armies were about to engage in the combat, Hashim—bin Otba, who came with the main body of the Syrian reinforcement, attacked the Persian lines, pierced it, reached the river and again returned to his party, spreading consternation among the enemy. But the Persian elephants began to cause havoc among the Moslems. In this juncture, Saad turned to Qaqaa for help. Qaqaa and his brother Asim blinded and wounded the biggest elephant, while two other fearless soldiers blinded another and cut its trunk. Both the wounded animals for a time rushed to

and fro between the two armies, then broke through the Persian lines and reached the river. The other elephants followed them and the whole herd did not stop before they reached the other side of the river. In spite of the discomfiture of the elephants, the battle lasted throughout the day with unabated zeal, but with no decisive result. Darkness of night brought temporary rest, but a few Arab tribes again commenced an attack, which developed into a general engagement lasting throughout the night amid screams of warriors and din of armour. Hence the night received the name of Harir or clangour. Unable to see how the battle fared for the Moslems, Saad passed the night praying for the success of his army. The morning sun found the two hosts still engaged in a deadly combat, the issue of which was uncertain. Acting on the principle that victory declares itself for the most persevering, Qaqaa led a fresh and vigourous attack upon the enemy. His example fired the enthusiasm of the whole Moslem army. Though they had been fighting for 24 hours without food and rest, the Moslems, as if with fresh vigour, fell upon the Persian centre, which gave way exposing the position of Rustam. A determined attack was now made upon Rustam himself, who fought bravely for a time, but being wounded tried to escape. A Moslem soldier named Hilal pursued him and

killed him.[1] On the fall of their general, the Persians began to run away hotly pursued by the Moslems who caused havoc among them. Thus the Moslems gained a splendid and decisive victory which crushed for the time being the military strength of the Persian empire and sealed the fate of Iraq and Mesopotamia. Though the Moslem loss of 8,500 souls far exceeded that of any previous battle, the casualty of the enemy was appalling. The spoils of war were rich beyond description. The value of the gold and precious stones found on the person of Rustam alone was about 70,000 dirhems, and the jewelled imperial banner made of panther's skin was worth 100,000 dirhems. In the division of the booty, each soldier got 6000 dirhems. Saad at once despatched a messenger to inform the Caliph of the great victory. So anxious was the Caliph for news of the battle, that he used to come out of Medina every morning in the hope that he might by chance meet some one coming from the field. In one of these excursions, he met a man riding fast on his camel. On inquiry he learnt that the man was Saad's messenger and that the Moslems were victorious. Flushed with joy, he walked by the side of the messenger's camel and gleaned from him the outlines of the battle. As they reached

[1] There are other versions of the circumstances leading to the death of Rustam.

Medina people saluted Omar from all sides. Perceiving by this mark of respect that the man walking by his camel was no other than the great Caliph Omar, the messenger apologised for not honouring him through ignorance. The Caliph assured him saying, "Brother, it is all right." Such was the simplicity of the early Caliphs. The battle took place in Moharram of 14th Hegira.[1]

Capture of Madain 15 A. H. or June, 637 A. D.

Flying from the field of Qadisya, the shattered remnant of the Persian army rallied in Babylon under the banner of Firuzan. Famous chiefs like Hormuzan and Mihran assembled there and placed their services at the disposal of that distinguished general. To give rest to his army, Saad halted at Qadisya for about two months during which time he also regained his own health. He then advanced against the enemy. Conquering Hira in the way, he reached Babylon and easily defeated the Persians, who retreated in different directions, destroying the bridges on the road to Madain. Saad again halted at Babylon, but sent a force in advance under Zohra, who was opposed by the Persians at Kothi. Here Shehryar, the Persian Commander, challenged any Arab to a single combat. In response to

[1] Some accounts place the battle in 15th A. H. and others again in 16th A. H.

the challenge, Zobra sent a slave who killed Shehryar. In the battle that followed the Persians were defeated. Saad now came up to Kothi and visited the place where Hadzrat Ibrahim was imprisoned by Nimrod. After a short stay at Kothi, he moved on to Bahrasher a suburb of Seleucia, which was in fact the western portion of the Persian capital Madain that is "the twain cities" on either bank of the Tigris. As the simple Arabs approached Bahrasher, the grand white palace of the Chosroes burst into their view. In wonder they involuntarily exclaimed, "Allaho akbar"[1] and were delighted at the prospect of conquering the Persian empire, the downfall of which was foretold by the holy Prophet. As the city was too strong to be carried by assault, it was besieged. The neighbouring chiefs acknowledged the suzerainty of the Moslems and became tributary. Thus the country to the west of the Tigris, that is, Mesopotamia, Iraq and the Swad, finally came under the sway of Islam. But still the city did not surrender. The siege lasted for a few months, during which period the Persians at times issued forth to attack the Arabs, but on each occasion they were repulsed. At last the pressure of the blockade was felt. Unable to resist any longer,

[1] "Allaho akbar" literally means "God is great." The expression is used as an interjection when something great or sublime is seen. It is also the battle-cry of the Moslems.

the Persians evacuated Seleucia and crossed over to Ctesiphon, on the other side of the river destroying all bridges and removing all boats.

Saad occupied Seleucia but could not follow up the pursuit by crossing over to Ctesiphon, which was the eastern portion of Madain, because he could not procure any boats. After a few weeks, information reached Saad that Yezdjard would soon leave Madain with all treasure and precious stones. He therefore decided to cross the river at once on his horse, as there was neither any bridge nor any boat. Seated on the back of his animal, he jumped into the rough and rapid river and his cavalry followed his example. Almost in battle array they reached the other side in safety. The Persians after a feeble resistance deserted the city which was occupied by Saad, who placed his pulpit in the white marble palace of the Chosroes. It may be noted to his credit, that he refrained from destroying the artistic figures which adorned the palace. With the capture of Madain in 15 A.H., that is June 637 A.D, countless gold and silver vessels, thousands of rare and precious articles and treasure beyond conception came into the hands of the Moslems. Gold became almost as cheap as silver. The brilliant tiara, the gorgeous robes and the jewelled girdle and sword of the Emperor, which fell into the hands of the conquerors, with the capture of some sumpter mules,

excited the wonder of the simple Arabs. Among other rare and valuable things were a life-size camel of silver with its rider of gold and a golden horse with its belt of emerald and trappings of gold. There was a carpet called Bahar (that is, the spring) on account of the scenery worked into it. It was made of gold, silver and precious jewels. In the centre was a green plot made of emeralds. In the margin were trees of gold and silver with leaves of silk and with flowers and fruits of precious stones. The Persian monarchs used to sit on the carpet and amuse themselves in drinking as if they were in the midst of perpetual spring.

All the valuable articles fell into the hands of the common soldiers who with uncommon honesty delivered them to their commander without misappropriating a single item. It is said that the treasure consisted of 1,500 million dirhems. The spoil was divided among the soldiers according to Islamic laws. The share of each soldier in an army of 60,000 units amounted to 12,000 dirhems. A fifth was sent to Medina for the state treasury. The carpet designated Bahar and a few other artistic and costly articles were also sent to the Caliph. Seeing the treasure and precious articles the simple citizens of Medina wondered at the immense wealth of the Persians. As Hadzrat Omar forbade further advance, Saad made Madain his head quarters,

He spent the summer of the 16th Hegira in consolidating his conquests. But events soon took a different turn, which led to an advance of the Moslem arms. On the loss of Madain, Yezdjard fled to Holwan beyond the hilly range separating Iraq-i-Arab from Persia. Here the Persians flocked round him in great numbers. Encouraged by their loyalty he began to make preparations to retrieve his fortune by another appeal to arms.

Battle of Jalula, 16 A. H. Decr. 637 A. D.

Khorzad, brother of Rustam, led a portion of the army to Jalula situated in the hilly range. He excavated a ditch round the town, recruited a large army and collected a vast quantity of stores with the object of marching upon Madain. Under the orders of Hadzrat Omar Saad sent Hashim bin Otba and Qaqaa with 12,000 soldiers against Jalula which was besieged. Though the siege lasted several months it made no impression on the town, as it was well provisioned and had a large army within it. Frequently troops would issue forth from the garrison and engagements would follow. In this way 80 engagements took place in which the Persians were invariably defeated, but with no decisive result. At last the Persians were determined to make a general attack and one day issued forth in force. The Moslems gave them a hot reception. By chance a strong storm began to

blow raising a cloud of dust. The Persians being enveloped in complete darkness, commenced to retreat. Thousands of them fell into the ditches and died. To prevent further loss of life, the Persians filled up the ditches in many places. Taking advantage of the confusion, the Moslems charged the enemy with redoubled vigour. Qaqaa with a body of soldiers pressed forward to the gate of the town. Both parties engaged in a fierce and deadly struggle. Hashim, the Moslem commander, was in the rear with the main body of the army, but Qaqaa proclaimed that the general reached the gate. The Moslems took Qaqaa to be their commander and fought with such superhuman energy and courage that the Persians were routed with heavy loss in Decr. 637 A.D. A fabulous sum and an immense quantity of precious stones which were hastily removed to that place from Madain fell into the hands of the Moslems. A large number of horses formed part of the booty. Each soldier got nine animals in his share. Numerous women, maids and princesses, who could not escape from the town became prisoners of war and were distributed among the combatants on the spot and those left in Madain. Ziad, the reputed son of Abu Sufian, a youth gifted with eloquence and ready wit, was sent to Medina in charge of the royal fifth share of the spoil. This warrior gave such a vivid and glowing account of the battle of

Jalula that Hadzrat Omar exclaimed that the valour of the Moslems on this occasion surpassed all previous record. As the royal share of the booty was brought out for distribution, Hadzrat Omar wept at the sight of the vast treasure. Being questioned about the cause of his grief, he replied that the immense treasure before him foreboded the future decline and fall of Islam.

Capture of Holwan.

On the fall of Jalula, Yezdjard left Holwan and proceeded to Rai. Saad sent Qaqaa towards Holwan. This intrepid soldier defeated the Persians in a battle near Holwan and on occupying the town proclaimed amnesty to all. The chiefs in the neighbourhood acknowledged the suzerainty of the Moslems and agreed to pay the Jizia. After the capture of Holwan, Hadzrat Omar, who was anxious to consolidate his conquests and avoid fresh adventures, issued strict orders to his generals not to cross the Persian range which was to be the boundary between the two empires. After the conquest of Madain, the cautious Caliph observed on several occasions, "It would have been a great advantage if a hill of fire intervened between us and the Persians, so that we could not attack each other." But the force of events, as will be seen hereafter, soon led him to rescind the orders.

The conquest of Khuzistan, 16 to 20 A. H.

On the side of Madain, the border of the new empire was protected by fortified places like Holwan; but in Lower Iraq, though Otba bin Ghezwan after protracted fighting established himself in Bussorah, the Persians still held Ahwaz and Ram Hormuz within a hundred miles of Bussorah. These places being a standing menace to the Moslems in Lower Iraq, a conflict in this region was bound to come sooner or later. The struggle was precipitated by a rash act on the part of Ala—bin Hadzrami, the Governor of Bahrein. Animated by a desire to emulate the success of Saad and Otba, Ala, in violation of the orders of the Caliph, sent an expedition, in 16 A. H., across the Persian Gulf for the conquest of Faris of which Istakhr or Persepolis was the capital. Landing from their ships, the Moslems advanced in three columns meeting with little opposition, but suddenly a strong Persian force appeared in their rear, destroyed their ships, and cut off their retreat to the sea. Though greatly outnumbered, the Moslems fought heroically and forced their way again to the sea. Finding that their ships had been destroyed by the enemy they turned towards Bussorah but their way in that direction was barred by the Persians. Information of the critical situation was sent to the Caliph who instructed Otba to rescue the

expedition from its perilous position. The army sent by Otba effected a junction with the expeditionary force and the combined army encompassed a successful retreat to Bussorah.

Campaign in Khuzistan 17 A. H. or 638 A. D.

The effect of the retreat was to restore the moral of the Persians. Hormuzan, a famous Persian general who escaping from the fields of Qadisya, had established himself in Khuzistan, began to raid into Moslem territory. Otba procured help from Saad for counter raids into Khuzistan and sent two lieutenants towards Monadir and Nahar Teri. These officers gained over the Arab tribe of Bani Aam and with their aid captured the towns. Hormuzan fled and sued for peace. Manadir and Nahar Teri were given to the Beni Aam and the portion of the district of Ahwaz occupied by the Moslems remained under their sway. Hormuzan was to rule over the rest of the country on payment of the Jizia. In the following year a boundary dispute cropped up.

Rebellion of Hormuzan, 18 A. H. or 639 A. D.

Hormuzan being dissatisfied with the decision of the Moslem lieutenant broke into open rebellion, but was defeated, and Moslem authority was established up to Toster, on which the Jizia was imposed. Hormuzan again sued for peace and was allowed to retain possession of the remaining part of the country on payment of the Jizia.

Capture of Ram Hormuz and Toster; 19 A. H. or 640 A. D.

In the midst of these events, Yezdjard collected a large army and incited the citizens of Ahwaz to rebel against the Moslems. Hadzrat Omar instructed Saad, the Governor of Kufa, to send a strong detachment under Numan bin Muqrin, who had taken a prominent part with two of his brothers to drive out the rebels from Zul Qasa in the Caliphate of Hadzrat Abu Bekr, towards Ram Hormuz. The object of the movement was to prevent Hormuzan from joining with Yezdjard. The Caliph also ordered Abu Musa, the then Governor of Bussorah, to send an army towards Ahwaz. Numan marched upon Ram Hormuz and occupied the town after defeating Hormuzan in the way. Hormuzan fled to Toster, raised an army there and fortified the place. Abu Musa besieged Toster otherwise called Shoster but it defied him for a long time. When the siege had lasted several months, a citizen offered to show a passage on condition that he and his family were pardoned. The offer being accepted, 200 Moslem volunteers entered the city by the secret passage and opened the gate. The whole Moslem army, which was ready for an entry, rushed into the city. Hormuzan being taken by surprise, surrendered on condition that his case should be decided by the Caliph himself. In accordance with this stipulation, he was sent to Medina. Adorned

with precious and shining ornaments, dressed in a gorgeous suit and armed with a jewelled sword, Hormuzan appeared in the city. When he entered the Apostolic mosque, he found Hadzrat Omar sleeping on the bare ground. Being disturbed by the foot-steps of the companions of Hormuzan, the illustrious Caliph awoke and expressed his thankfulness to the Almighty God for humbling proud persons like the prisoner before him by the hands of Moslems. He then asked Hormuzan to show cause why he should not receive condign punishment for violating treaties with the Moslems on several occasions. Hormuzan asked for and received assurance that his life would be safe until he fully stated his explanation. He then asked for a cup of water and again requested the Caliph to spare his life till he drank its contents. As soon as the Caliph assented to the proposal, Hormuzan kept down the cup and refused to drink, saying that his life was safe as long as he did not drink. Nonplussed by the trick, the Caliph exclaimed that the prisoner was a liar, but the by-standers supported him. At last the Caliph observed that it would have been well if Hormuzan had become a Moslem. Hormuzan replied with a smile that he was already a Moslem. The Caliph who was agreeably surprised pardoned him and granted a pension. In later years the Caliph used to consult Hormuzan regarding the affairs of Persia.

After the occupation of Toster, Abu Subrah, Numan and Abu Musa marched upon Sus, while Zar besieged the important town of Jand Isabur. Erelong, Abu Musa was ordered to return to Bussorah and Numan was selected for a very important command. The chief of Sus surrendered on the condition that pardon was granted to 100 persons named in a list. Through mistake, he omitted to enter his own name, so he was beheaded. A Moslem slave granted amnesty to Jand Isabur, which action was confirmed by the Caliph on the ground that Moslems were bound even by the promise of a slave. Khuzistan was thus added to the Moslem empire.[1]

Capture of Sus and Jand Isabur.

The disaster to Persian arms in the battle of Jalula led Yezdjard to seek safety in Rai, but the chief of the place proving disloyal, he moved to Ispahan and Kerman and then settled in Merv in Khorasan. He was under the agreeable impression that the wave of Arab invasion would break at the foot of the Persian Range and the Moslems would be satisfied with the conquest of Ahwaz and the outlying provinces, which were considerably peopled by Arab tribes; but the campaign in Khuzistan opened his eyes. He sent messengers to the governors of the

Battle of Nihawand called the victory of victories; 21 A. H. or 642 A. D.

[1] There is another version of the campaign in Khuzistan.

different provinces urging them to make a final great effort to save their country. These governors were practically independent rulers, but in face of a common danger they united together. Recruits from different parts of the country rallied round the auspicious standard made of panther's skin and an army of 150,000 men started for Nihawand under the command of Firuzan. Hadzrat Omar on his part now saw that nothing but complete subjugation of Persia would secure peace. Being apprised of the preparations of the Persians, the Caliph sent orders to Syria, Yemen, Bussorah and other places to send contingents for the army formed to oppose the Persians. Numan was recalled from Khuzistan to assume the command of the force. This skilful general started from Kufa with only 30,000 men and marched towards Nehawand. At the instance of Tolayha he halted at a place 6 or 7 miles from Nehawand and sent Qaqaa with a small force to attack the town and draw out the enemy. After starting the fight Qaqaa began to retreat continuously. The enemy pursued and pressed him hard little suspecting any danger. When the Persians came within striking distance Numan and his men attacked the enemy with prodigious energy. Heaps of corpses dotted the ground, the field became miry with blood, and the earth shook and trembled with the din

of battle. Numan's horse slipped in the miry field and fell down with the rider. The general received fatal injuries, but he forbade any one to cease to fight in order to attend upon him. Before the determined and irresistable attack of the Moslems, the Persians gave way in the night and in 21 A. H or 642 A. D. fled from the field leaving behind 30,000 corpses. This victory, which is called by the Arabs the Victory of Victories, completely crushed the Persians who could not thereafter offer any serious resistance. The Moslems pursued the Persians up to Hamadan, the citizens of which place being unable to withstand the rigour of a siege agreed to pay tribute. Hozayfa, who succeeded Numan encamped at Nehawand, where the spoils of war were collected. The priest of a fire temple, on receipt of pardon, delivered the hidden treasure, which Parwiz had deposited there for safe custody. Precious stones, which subsequently fetched 4,000,000 dirhems, formed part of the treasure. These were sent to the Caliph who on account of a dream ordered their sale proceeds to be divided among the soldiers. Gradually the chiefs in the neighbourhood became tributary. In this way Iraq-i-Ajam acknowledged the suzerainty of the Arabs.

Hadzrat Omar, in pursuance of his policy of securing peace by the conquest of Persia, now issued orders for campaigns against the

different parts of the country. With this object he prepared several standards with his hands and gave them to various generals for the conquest of the different provinces. The governors of the provinces were practically independent rulers, some of whom possessed vitality. They opposed the Moslems, but in most cases, their resistance was feeble; and in the end they availed themselves of the generous terms offered by the Moslems and contrived to retain possession of their provinces on payment of tribute.

The history of the conquest of Khorasan deserves a short notice, because it reveals the fate of Yezdjard. In 22 A. H. or 643 A. D., Ahnaf, son of Qays, marched to Herat in Khorasan and then turned towards Merv Shahjahan held by Yezdjard who on the approach of the Moslems fled to Merv Roz. Ahnaf easily occupied Merv Shahjahan and marched upon Merv Roz. Yezdjard again retreated and fell back on Balkh, where he gave battle, but being defeated he took shelter in the territory of the Khaqan, who espoused his cause and with a large number of Turks marched towards Khorasan. On strategical grounds, Ahnaf withdrew to Merv Roz and entrenched himself in a well-chosen field. Here the Khaqan met with a reverse and turned back to his territory. The chiefs accompanying Yezdjard robbed him of his treasure as he refused to make terms with

the Moslems. The unfortunate Yezdjard now returned in penury to the Khaqan and lived in the capital of the Turks till the time of Hadzrat Othman, when he met with an ignoble death. Thus within the short space of about two years, Azerbijan, Khorasan, Faris, Kerman, Sistan or Sijistan and Makran were conquered and added to the empire. The conquest of each of these provinces considerably extended the boundary of the empire and formed a glorious feat of arms. But these annexations however wide and glorious did not then attract much attention in the face of the brilliant and almost world-wide conquests of Hadzrat Omar.

Though the provinces of Persia were conquered in a short time, it was long before the country was pacified. The people would at first break into rebellion on the slightest opportunity, but gradually a large number of persons attracted by the excellences of Islam and the privileges of the Moslems, professed the religion of the holy Prophet of Arabia and hence peace and order again prevailed in the country.

CHAPTER XXIII

The War with the Romans.

While the Moslems were having skirmishes with the Romans on the banks of the Yarmuk, Hadzrat Abu Bekr breathed his last. As a matter of fact, a messenger from the new Caliph Omar brought to the camp the sad news of the death, while the great decisive battle was in progress. The same messenger delivered to the kind-hearted and mild general Abu Obayda a letter appointing him to the supreme command in place of Khalid.[1] For obvious reasons, Abu Obayda kept the news to himself till the victorious termination of the battle. Khalid accordingly made over the charge of his command and brushing aside all personal consideration placed his services with rare patriotism and magnanimity at the disposal of the new commander-in-chief. Abu Obayda on his part recognised the unique military genius of Khalid by consulting him on all important occasions and acting up to his advice. Khalid thus remained the guiding spirit of the campaign in Syria in spite of his loss of the chief command. The scene of action

[1] Sir William Muir in his "Annals of the early Caliphate" writes that the letter was delivered to Khalid. This story is not quite probable. The version given in the text has been taken from Ibn Khuldun.

of the Syrian army was different alike from the barren sandy plains and rocks of Arabia and the marshes of Iraq with its luxuriant vegetable growth. "To the South was the undulating pasture ground of Belcaa and again to the north of the Yarmuk the pasture-lands of Jaulan. Between these two pastoral tracts lay the hills and dales of Gilead, with their fields of wheat and barley, dotted here and there with clumps of the shady oak, olive and sycamore and thickets of arbute, myrtle and oleander. It was emphatically a good land, 'a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills.' The landscape, diversified with green slopes and glens, is in season gay with carpeting of flowers and melody of birds. From heights not far north of the Yarmuk, beyond the green expanse around, might be descried the blue waters of the sea of Galilee sparkling in the west, and still farther the snow-capped peaks of the Lebanon and Hermon—a strange contrast to the endless sands and stony plains of the peninsula. Not less marked was the contrast with the land of Chaldæa. There the marshy delta of the Euphrates displays an almost tropical luxuriance; while above it the plains of Mesopotamia, with its net-work of canals, are covered by vast mounds, the site of cities teeming with life in the early cycles of the world and strewn with fragments of pottery and

bricks stamped with strange devices—mysterious records of bygone kingdoms. Here, on the contrary, the pride of the Byzantine empire was yet alive. From the Jordan to the desert were colonial cities founded by the Romans, boasting their churches, theatres, and forums. Even the naval contest of the naumachia might be witnessed in the land of Gilead. The country was populous and flourishing, inhabited by a mongrel race half Arab and half Syrian, who aspired to the privileges and aped the luxurious habits, without the chivalry and manliness, of the Roman citizen. It was altogether a civilisation of forced and exotic growth. No sooner was the western prop removed than the people returned to their Bedouin life, true sons of the desert; the chariot and waggon were banished for the camel; and nothing left of Roman rule but columns and peristyles, causeways and aqueducts, great masses of ruined masonry which still startle the traveller as if belonging to another world. But, at the time we write of, the age of so-called civilisation was still dominant there."[1] Such was the country in which Abu Obayda was now to fight with the Romans. Leaving a strong detachment on the Yarmnk, Abu Obayda turned towards Fihl (the ancient Pelta) in his rear, where was a Roman garrison. In the way he came to learn that the remnant of the huge army

[1] Quoted from Sir William Muir's Annals of the Early Caliphate.

defeated on the Yarmuk was reforming in Fihl, that the soldiers stationed at Damascus were about to join that army, and that Heraclius himself was present in Hems. He communicated these informations to Hadzrat Omar who sent out instructions for a bold and decisive attack upon Damascus itself, the citadel of Syria. Detailing a division of his army to blockade the Romans at Fihl, and assigning to another division a position between Damascus and Hems with the object of preventing the arrival of any reinforcement from that quarter and posting a third division between Damascus and the Palestine with a similar object, Abu Obayda marched upon Damascus, the hoary capital of Syria, founded in the days before Abraham. The city stood in a plain watered and fertilised by the Barada and other streams which issued from mount Lebanon and other neighbouring hills. It contained many beautiful gardens and rich fields and rightly earned the appellation of the "Garden of the World." Its wealth and grandeur were well known to the Arabs, who used to flock there for commercial purposes. It was a city worth fighting for but was too strong to be carried by assault. Abu Obayda therefore closely invaded the city assigning the positions in front of different gates to different generals. The besiegers then hurled forth by means of military engines masses of stone on the rampart, but the attack

made no impression on the massive walls of the city, which were twenty feet high and fifteen broad. Moslem archers tried their skill in pouring forth showers of arrows but these proved ineffectual against the defenders, who were well-protected in the numerous turrets. Nothing daunted the Moslems continued the siege which lasted for seventy days (or six months according to a different version). The Damascenes were for sometime buoyed up with the hope that Heraclius would send an army to repel the invaders, They further thought that in any case the besiegers would abandon the siege unable to withstand the cold of the winter season in front. But none of their hopes were fulfilled. Zulkela stopped the passage of the army sent by Heraclius for the relief of the unfortunate besieged town. In fact he was posted on the way between Damascus and Hems with this object. The cold season also had no effect upon the ardour of the besiegers. When things came to such a pass, one day the Damascenes in order to celebrate the birth of a son to their Governor gave themselves up to revelry and quitted their posts early in the evening. Taking advantage of this neglect of duty on the part of the Damascenes, the wideawake Khalid, who kept himself informed of every movement of the enemy, with Qaqaa and another fearless soldier crossed the ditch round the city by means of inflated leather

bags and reached the top of the rampart, with the help of scaling ropes with nooses to catch the projected parts of the wall. Khalid and his two companions next landed within the walls and fought their way to the gate, though the guards and the citizens rushed upon them in great number. Khalid despatched with his sword two gate-keepers and Qaqaa opened the gate, upon which the army under Khalid, ready for action, rushed into the city. Realising their helpless plight, the Roman chiefs threw open the other gates and accepting the usual generous terms of peace, surrendered themselves to Hadzrat Abu Obayda and other generals. In the meantime Khalid and his army fought their way far into the city amidst a scene of carnage. The citizens appealed to the generous Abu Obayda against the severity of Khalid. The appeal fell on sympathetic ears. Khalid was reasoned to give up the rights of a victor; the soldiers were commanded to abstain from plundering, life and property were declared safe and not a single individual was taken captive; churches were proclaimed inviolable. Every one was at liberty to profess his own religion, but non-Moslems had to pay the usual poll tax known as Jizia in lieu of exemption from military service and the protection guaranteed by the victors. The government of the city was placed in the hands of Yezid bin Abu Sufian, who subsequently

extended his dominion from Tadmor on the north east to Hauran on the south-west. The contingent of soldiers which came from Iraq was sent back under Hashim Bin Otba. This division, as has been seen in the preceding chapter, reached Iraq in time to take part in the great battle of Qadisya. On the completion of these arrangements, Abu Obayda with his army left Damascus.[1]

Battle of Fihl, 14 A.H. or 635 A.D.

Before any further advance could be made it was necessary for Abu Obayda to clear his rear of the enemy. He therefore left Damascus, with his army, and advanced to Fihl, where Abul Aur held the Romans in check. The Romans were encamped on the opposite, that is the western, side of the Jordan, at a place named Bisan, where they were strengthened by fresh reinforcements. To guard themselves against any sudden attack, they dammed the streams. Thus the whole valley between the two armies became a vast sheet of water which rendered the Moslem horse ineffective. But at the same time it shut in the Romans, while the Arabs had

[1] There are several versions of the history of the conquest of Damascus. According to one account, a bishop offered to help Khalid in the conquest of the city provided he granted favourable terms of peace. Moulana Shibli in Al-Faruq practically says that the usual terms of peace were granted. In the text I have substantially given the usual terms.

the advantage of free access to the valley of the Jordan, whence they could obtain their supplies. Under the circumstances Abul Aur resolved to hold the Romans in check till the summer should dry up the ground. When the summer was well advanced, Hadzrat Abu Obayda reached Fihl with his army. He continued the blockade and sent Abul Aur towards Tiberias to prevent any diversion from that quarter. Famous generals like Khalid bin Walid, Amr-al Aas, Shorahbil, Zarar and Ayaz bin Ghanam were in charge of the different sections of the Moslem army. Reduced to straits by the long blockade and mistaking the inaction on the part of the Moslems for weakness, the Romans one night led a fierce attack, but they found the Moslems well prepared and got a hot reception. A severe struggle took place which lasted for some days and nights. In the end, the Roman general fell and his army broke and fled, pursued by the victorious Moslems who caused havoc among them.[1] It is said that 80,000 Romans

[1] The account of the battle of Fihl given in the text has been taken from Ibn Khuldun. Moulana Shibli Numani in his Al-Faruq has given a full description of the battle from Fatuh-as Sham Azdi but it is somewhat different from the story in the text. I give below two interesting incidents narrated by Maulana Shibli. At the request of the Romans, Muaz bin Jabal was sent to the Roman camp, to discuss the terms of peace. On reaching the Roman camp, Muaz found gold embroidered brocades spread in the tents and stopped outside. A Roman requested him to sit on the brocades, but he sat down

perished in this great battle. An immense booty fell into the hands of the victors. The Moslems now marched upon Bisan and defeated with great slaughter the defenders of the town who sued for and obtained peace. Tiberias and the town of Jordan followed the example of Bisan and the whole province of Jordan was soon brought under Moslem sway by Shorahbil and Amr-al-Aas. The usual terms of peace which were granted to Damascus were extended throughout the province and soldiers were posted at different stations to maintain order.

Conquest of Northern Syria; 14 and 15 A. H. or 635 and 636 A.D.

On the fall of Damascus and Jordan, two large cities, *viz.*, Hims and Antioch remained to be subjugated. The capture of these cities meant the conquest of the whole of Syria. Leaving Amr-al—Aas and Shorahbil to reduce the province of Jordan. Abu Obayda marched from Fihl towards Hims (Emessa) as that city was nearer and probably less strongly defended than the other. Zul Kelaa

on the bare ground observing that he did not like to sit on the brocades purchased at the expense of poor tax-payers. After this event a Roman envoy came to the Moslem camp. At the time Hadzrat Abu Obayda seated on bare ground, was examining some arrows. The Roman expected to spot the Moslem general by the pomp and grandeur surrounding him, but to his great astonishment, he found none. He was therefore obliged to enquire who was the commander-in-chief. When men pointed out Abu Obayda, the Roman had much difficulty in believing that the simple man before him was actually the great general.

with his Himayarite contingent joined the expedition. The Moslems did not proceed far, when two large Roman armies led by Theodore and Shanas came upon them. Abu Obayda undertook to deal with Shanas and instructed Khalid to oppose Theodore. As Zul Kelaa no longer barred the way to Damascus, Theodore suddenly turned upon that city hoping to carry it by a surprise attack. But Yezid came out of the city walls and gave him a hot reception. In the meantime Khalid who had followed close upon Theodore's heels, came up and attacked his rear. Thus hemmed in, Theodore's large army was almost annihilated by the Moslems who captured the bag and baggage carried by the enemy. Abu Obayda engaged the army under Shanas in an action at Marj Rum not far from Damascus. While the battle was in progress, Khalid came up with his victorious division and joined Abu Obayda. The Moslems were elated with joy and loudly shouted out their familiar battle cry of "Allaho Akbar." The Romans became depressed; their general Shanas met with death in the hands of Abu Obayda; and they themselves precipitately left the field to seek shelter within the walls of Hims. When the news of the disaster reached Heraclius he proceeded towards Roha (Edessa). The way to Hims was now clear. Abu Obayda marched straight to that city and closely invested it. It was a city

famous in ancient times on account of a colossal statue called Shams or the Sun. It was looked upon as a sacred figure to visit which large crowds used to flock there from distant places. From his refuge in Roha, Heraclius incited the Mesopotamians to come to the rescue of Hims, but hard pressed by the rigour of the siege the city surrendered and obtained the same terms as Damascus.[1] Placing Obayda, one of the twelve persons who had taken the First pledge of Acaba, in charge of Hims, Abu Obayda resumed his northward march towards Antioch. In the way Hama or Epiphania, Shairaz or Larissa and Maara opened their gates to him without any opposition and obtained the usual terms of peace. Laodicia, a strongly fortified town towards the sea coast offered resistance but was reduced by a stratagem. The Moslems made a feint of raising the siege and withdrew from the vicinity of the town. Being thus deceived the citizens opened the gates of the city wall and

[1] In Iban Khuldun, it is stated that when Heraclius proceeded towards Roha he incited the Mesopotamians to come to the rescue Hims. This appeal found a ready response and a considerable force from that country marched to the relief of Hims. On receipt of this information Saad sent an invading column to Hit and Kerkesia in consequence of which the Mesopotamians returned to their country. A similar story of assistance by the Mesopotamians has been narrated when the Romans attempted to recapture Hims. Both the stories cannot be correct. It is more probable that the Mesopotamians sided with the Romans in their effort to reconquer Hims.

engaged in their ordinary business. Early in the next morning, the Moslems reappeared suddenly, entered into the city through one of the gates and overpowered the garrison. Before proceeding further north, Abu Obayda sent Khalid against Kinnisrin or Chalcis to clear his rear of all enemy. Minas, one of the highest officials of the Roman empire, opposed the way. Khalid defeated his army with great slaughter, reduced the city by a siege and demolished all defensive works. This victory of Khalid pleased Hadzrat Omar so much that he exclaimed, "I shall make Khalid independent, may the blessing of God be upon Abu Bakr, he knew men better than myself." Hadzrat Abu Obayda next turned his attention towards Halb (Aleppo). Several Bedouin Arab tribes, who resided in the vicinity accepted the usual terms of peace and subsequently came over to the fold of Islam. After a short siege, Aleppo sued for peace and became tributary.

Hadzrat Abu Obayda now marched upon Antioch which was the capital of the Roman East. Here Christians from all parts of the country took shelter. They came out of the city to oppose the Moslems but being defeated, sought protection within the city walls of astonishing height and thickness executed with bold conception through rocks and ravine. Undaunted by the strong defences, the invaders

besieged the city which surrendered on condition that the Christians at their option would leave the place or would pay the Jiziah. Ere long the Christians broke their faith and were once more reduced by Ayaz, son of Ghanam, but peace was magnanimously granted on the same terms as before. These victories of the Moslems so much impressed the Romans with the superiority of the Arab arms, that wherever an Arab leader with a handful of soldiers appeared, the people accepted the suzerainty of the Moslems without any resistance. Thus all the towns of Syria gradually fell into the hands of the Moslems and in about two years the province was subjugated. Though the history of the conquest of a large number of towns, nay, of the whole of northern Syria has been compressed into a small compass, the achievements were none the less brilliant. Any nation in any age could be proud of such a glorious military feat. In accordance with the instructions of the Caliph, Hadzrat Abu Obayda stationed soldiers in each town and appointed an officer therein for its good government and the maintenance of peace.

The battle of Ajnadin, 15 A. H. or 636 A. D.

While Hadzrat Abu Obayda was engaged in his brilliant campaign in Northern Syria, the operations of Amr-al-Aas and Shorahbil in the district of Jordan were no less successful.

Being alarmed at their success the Roman Governor, Artabin, assembled a large force at Ajnadin. Sending detachments to keep Ramleh and Jerusalem in check, Amar-al-Aas and Shorahbil marched upon Ajnadin where a severe battle took place in which both parties fought with conspicuous bravery. In the end Artabin, defeated with heavy loss, fled to Jerusalem with the remnant of his army.

Capitulation of Jerusalem, 16 A. H. or 637 A. D.

The victory at Ajnadin led to the easy capture of Sabtah, Gaza, Nablus, Bait-Jibrin and several other towns. In fact all the towns and districts in the province of the Jordan and round about Jerusalem were conquered. Amr then turned his attention to Jerusalem and invested the city, which was protected on every side by deep valleys and steep ascents. In addition to these natural defences, the walls and towers had been repaired and strengthened since the invasion of Syria and the veterans of Ajnadin had found a suitable rallying place in the city, on the ramparts of which military engines were incessantly at work, harassing the Moslems. Severe winter added to the difficulties of the besieging force. In the last place soldiers or civilians, Romans or Syrians, all were equally zealous in protecting the sepulchre of Christ. The besieged city thus offered a serious resistance for about a month. By this time Hadzrat

Abu Obayda completed the conquest of Syria and began to move his army with a view to join the invading force. The news of this expected accession of strength and the unflinching perseverance of the Moslems secured success in the end. Finding further resistance hopeless, the Patriarch of the place sued for peace. He however coupled his proposals of capitulation with the unique request that the Caliph should come in person to write out the terms of peace. The request was communicated to the great Caliph who at once started for Jerusalem, leaving Hadzrat Aly in charge of the affairs at Medina. Dispensing with all the pomp and retinue which would ordinarily have accompanied the Caliph of Islam, Hadzrat Omar performed the journey with a few followers. Yezid bin Abu Sufian, Khalid bin Walid and some other eminent persons came to receive him at Jabia. The sight of their gorgeous garments of brocade and richly caparisoned animals so much upset Hadzrat Omar that he dismounted from his horse, picked up stones and threw them at the distinguished visitors. They appeased him to some extent with the reply that they possessed warlike qualities in spite of their showy dress. A deputation from Jerusalem came to the Caliph at Jabia for final settlement of the terms of capitulation which were embodied in the form

of a treaty.[1] By this document security of life and property was guaranteed to all, churches were declared safe, and religious toleration was granted. The citizens were exempted from military duty and were promised protection from external enemies. But in return for all these privileges they had to pay the usual poll tax, Jiziah. Any one not accepting these terms was at liberty to leave the city without any molestation. The Caliph now proceeded on his journey to Jerusalem. When he neared the holy city, the hoofs of his horse were so worn that the animal limped. Noticing the piteous condition of the horse, the considerate Caliph got down and began to walk. Hadzrat Abu Obayda and others who came to receive him blushed at the thought that the Christians on account of the humble dress of the Caliph would form a low opinion of him. Some one brought good garments and a horse of Turkish descent for the illustrious Caliph, but he refused the offer remarking that the respect which he commanded was due to his faith in Islam and that was sufficient for him. He received Sophronious the Patriarch of Jerusalem with courtesy and entered the city with him. At the time of prayer, he happened to be in the church of the Resurrection, but he refused to offer his

[1] According to Balzori, the treaty was executed in Jerusalem.

prayers there lest the Moslems in the future might violate treaty rights on the pretence of imitating his example. Before he left Jerusalem, the Caliph laid the foundations of a mosque on the sacred mount Zion near the place where the holy Prophet had mounted on Boraq in his ascension to Heaven. The rock still bears the impression of one of the holy feet which has been preserved with gilt wire netting.[1] With the fall of Jerusalem, the conquest of Palestine was almost complete.

Roman attack upon Hims, 17 A. H., 638 A.D.

Alarmed at the rapid progress of Islamic arms, the people of Jazirah or Mesopotamia requested Heraclius to start a fresh campaign against the Moslems promising to join him in the enterprise. Encouraged by the promise of co-operation, Heraclius collected a large army and directed them to proceed to the attack of Hims. On the other hand, the Mesopotamians raised an army thirty thousand strong. Hadzrat Abu Obayda on his part collected together all his soldiers, recalled Khalid bin Walid from

[1] With regard to the holy foot-print Ali Bey writes, "This print is now covered with a large sort of cage of gilt metal wire, worked in such a manner that the print cannot be seen on account of the darkness within but it may be touched with the hand through a hole made on purpose." In this connection Sir William Muir says, "and in a depression of the rock, the eye or the hand of faith still traces the outline of the Prophet's foot, imprinted there as he sprang into his airy saddle."

Kenniserin, encamped himself outside the walls of Hims and reported the facts to the Caliph. The indefatigable Caliph despatched messengers in all directions, asked Saad to send Qaqaa bin Amar, who was stationed at Kufa,[1] to Hims with 4,000 horse and instructed Sohil bin Adi to march to Roqqa in order to prevent the advance of the Mesopotamian army upon Hims. He adopted various other measures and himself proceeded to Jabia so that he might be better able to conduct the operations. Learning of the advance of the Moslems upon their own country, the Mesopotamians who had taken part in the siege of Hims left the place to protect their own hearth and home. The tribes of Arabia who had joined the Romans offered to come over to the side of the Moslems at the time of the engagement. Considering the circumstances favourable, Hadzrat Abu Obayda delivered a stirring speech to his soldiers and ordered an attack. The Romans retreated in disorder before the avalanche-like charge of the Moslems and their attempt to regain Hims proved a failure. Moslem suzerainty was now firmly established in Syria.

As noticed before, the victories, which had attended the Moslem arms, caused consternation

[1] Kufa was one of the eight military centres which Hadzrat Omar established. In each of these places 4,000 horses were constantly kept ready for action.

in the neighbouring countries and led them to take the field for their own safety. Jazirah or Mesopotamia[1] being close to Iraq was the first to make preparations for war. In 15 A.H. Saad sent the news to Hadzrat Omar who commanded Abdullah, son of Almatim, to attack the country. With 500 men Abdullah invested the town of Takrit. The siege lasted for 40 days during which period 24 attacks were made upon the town but without any decisive result. The Romans on their part lost all hope of success and thought of escaping by boats with all their effects. The Christian Bedouins who lived in the town revealed to Abdullah the plan of the Romans and offered to help him, on protection being guaranteed to them. To test their sincerity Abdullah asked them to embrace Islam and they readily acted up to the suggestion. On the appointed day, when Abdullah led his army to the attack of the town, the war-cry of the Moslems, according to pre-arrangements, became a signal to the Bedouins of Takrit to raise a similar cry on the side of the river. Misled by this stratagem the Romans and the Persians unwittingly rushed into the quarter where the army of Islam was located. The Moslems

Conquest of Jazirah or Mesopotamia from 15 to 17 A. H. or 636 to 638 A.D.

[1] Mesopotamia was partly under the suzerainty of the Romans and partly under the Persians, but the Roman influence was predominant.

in a body attacked the enemy in front and the Bedouins fell upon him from the rear. Under this double onslaught the enemy was nearly annihilated and Takrit came under Moslem sway. It has been noted in a preceding page that in 17 A.H., the inhabitants of Jazirah with promises of help induced Heraclius to attack Hims and they themselves marched towards Hit in considerable strength. Coming to hear of the news, Saad sent Omar, son of Malik to repel the attack. Omar besieged Hit and compelled it to surrender. On being apprised of the activity and intrigue of the enemy Hadzrat Omar appointed Ayaz, son of Ghanum to the chief command of the army sent to operate in Mesopotamia and thus the whole country was soon subjugated. Roha Roqqa, Haran, Nesibin, Someisat and other towns surrendered with little or no resistance. It is said that one of his Lieutenants even conquered Malatia.

Dismissal of Khalid, 17 A.H. or 638 A.D.

Hadzrat Omar had formed a very unfavourable opinion of Khalid bin Walid on account of his ferocious temper, his conduct in the affair of Malik bin Navirah, and his refusal to render any account of the public money in his hands. For these reasons the Caliph removed Khalid from the chief command in Syria, but being pleased with his victories in Syria, he

appointed him governor of Kinnisrin. About this time, it was noised abroad, that Khalid amassed a large fortune out of the spoils of war, gave 10,000 dirhems to the poet Ashath for a panegyrical poem and bathed in water mixed with wine. Hadzrat Omar's reporters [1] communicated the news to him. The Caliph was naturally much annoyed with Khalid and asked Hadzrat Abu Obayda to summon Khalid to Hims and take his explanation. Khalid promised not to bathe again in water mixed with wine but he did not give any reply to the other charges. His turban was therefore taken from his head and his hands were tied with it in accordance with the orders of the Caliph. When Khalid found himself in this plight, he said that the reward to Ashath had been given out of his own money. His hands were therefore untied and he was sent to Medina. Reaching the holy city, Khalid reproached the Caliph with unjust treatment. The Caliph in reply asked him how he had amassed a large fortune. Khalid said, "My fortune is made up of my share of the spoils of war. I amassed 60,000 dirhems in the Caliphate of Hadzrat Abu Bakr and the rest in your time. If you like, you may take the excess over 60,000 dirhems." The fortune of Khalid was found to be of the value of 80,000 dirhems, so the Caliph

[1] The Caliph sent a reporter with each army whose duty was to report to him all facts which deserved his attention.

made over 20,000 dirhems, to the public treasury and issued a proclamation saying that he deposed Khalid not for fraud but because men began to assign all victories to him and not to God. Khalid returned to Hims where he died in 21 A.H. as a distinguished citizen but not encircled by the pomp and glamour of office. The incident of Khalid's dismissal shows nothing but the unique courage and stern sense of duty of the Caliph.

Reduction of Caesarea, 19 A.H. or 640 A.D.

Caesarea, now a heap of ruins, was in those days a great city, which boasted of 300 markets. Amr-al-Aas had besieged it for a considerable period in 13 A.H., but could not reduce it. After the death of Hadzrat Abu Obayda, the indefatigable Caliph Omar sent Yezid bin Abu Sufian for its capture. Yezid marched with an army 17,000 strong and invested the town. Being attacked with pestilence he returned to Damascus, where he died. The task of the conquest of Caesarea thus devolved upon his brother Muaviya. The citizens made several sorties and attacked the besieging army but were each time defeated. In spite of these defeats, Caesarea did not surrender. One day a Jew showed to Muaviya an underground way, leading to the fort of the town. A few desperate soldiers proceeded by the path and opened the gate of the fort. The Moslem army rushed in and

captured the town. The conquest of Syria and Palestine was now complete.[1]

[1] There are wide divergences in the accounts of the reduction of Caesarea. Ibn Khaldun says that Muaviya reduced it in 15 A.H. According to Byzantine historians, the siege lasted for 7 years and the city was finally reduced in 19 A.H. Other historians have given different dates. In fact all years between 15 A.H. and 20 A.H. have been assigned to the fall of Caesarea.

In connection with the surrender of Caesarea Mr. Amir Ali in his History of the Saracens writes—" After their last defeat, the Romans recognised themselves hopelessly beaten, though they still continued to raid into the Moslem territories. In order to erect an impassable barrier between themselves and the Saracens, they converted into a veritable desert a vast tract on the frontiers of their remainng Asiatic possessions. All the cities in this doomed tract were razed to the ground, fortresses were dismantled, and the population carried away further north. And what has been deemed to be the work of Saraceni hordes, was really the outcome of Byzantine barbarism. This short sighted measure, however, was of no avail, for Iyaz who now commanded in Northern Syria, passed the mountains of Taurus and reduced under Moslem rule the province of Calicia, with its capital Taurus the ancient monument of the Assyrian Kings.

CHAPTER XXIV

FAMINE IN NORTHERN ARABIA AND THE PESTILENCE IN AMWAS IN 18 A.H. OR 639 A.D.

Famine in Northern Arabia and the Pestilence in Amwas, 18 A.H. or 639A.D.

In 18 A.H. a dire famine spread over Northern Arabia and long with it, a virulent pestilence broke out in Amwas and spread throughout Syria and even to Iraq. Herds and flocks died of starvation or became so emaciated as to be unfit for human consumption. Pressed by want, wild animals sought for food from the hands of men. Fairs and markets became deserted.

The pious and austere Caliph swore not to touch milk and butter till the famine ceased. Once his servant procured for him some milk and butter at a high price but he refused to partake of them and distributed them as alms. On another occasion he took his son to task for eating cucumber, when men around him were dying of hunger. He wrote to the heads of the different provinces to send grain to Medina. Hadzrat Abu Obayda sent 4,000 camel loads of grain and Amr-al-Aas sent a considerable quantity by ships from the port of Ayla [1] One

[1] Some historians say that Amar-al-Aas sent grain from Egypt, but this story cannot be true as Egypt was not in all probability conquered at the time

day the Caliph set out with the citizens of Medina to offer prayers for rain. When the service was over, he delivered an impressive sermon. In the end, he caught hold of the hand of Hadzrat Abbas, and implored for rain for the sake of the kinsman of the Prophet. No sooner was the prayer concluded than rain descended in torrents and the land again became green with vegetation and the famine disappeared after a duration of nine months.

The pestilence wrought terrible havoc. It raged with virulence in Hims and Damascus, the headquarters of the Moslem army. Both the high and the low began to fall sudden victim to the scourge. Consternation and despair was depicted on every face. Intending to save Hadzrat Abu Obayda from the ravage of the pestilence, the considerate Caliph summoned him to Medina; but the chivalrous general divining the motive of the call, chose to share the danger with his army, rather than leave his post. At this juncture Hadzrat Omar started for the scene of the disaster but some distinguished persons from the affected area met him near Tabuk and persuaded him to return to Medina. On this occasion Hadzrat Abu Obayda, who was a thorough predestinarian, got annoyed and inquired from the Caliph if he wanted to avoid his destiny. Hadzrat Omar replied, he turned by the

"will of God to the will of God." He next instructed Hadzrat Abu Obayda to remove to Jabia with all his army, as the place was famous for its good climate. Here the general contracted the fell disease and breathed his last. Yezid bin Abu Sufian, Shorahbil and many other notable persons were among the victims of the pestilence. The epidemic thinned the ranks of the soldiers and the victorious career of the Moslems met a temporary check. In spite of vigorous and wise measures adopted by the Caliph, about 25,000 persons were carried off. The administration of the estates of the deceased persons, the filling up of the numerous vacancies caused by the ravage of the pestilence and the consideration of other matters required the serious attention of the Caliph. He therefore set out for Syria, and travelled on theback of a camel without any pomp. His way happened to pass through the Christian settlement of Ayala. Desirous of travelling incognite he began to drive his own camel and when men flocked out of the villages and inquired where was the Caliph, he replied "the Caliph is before you" which expression he used with double meaning. The men understood that the Caliph was ahead and turned back. Hadzrat Omar got down quietly in the house of the bishop to take rest during the hot hours of the day and requested his host to mend his coat. The bishop not

only repaired the torn garment but also made a new one of lighter material suitable for the season. The Caliph however preferred to use his own garment. He made a circuit of the towns of Syria and gave instructions for the collection of the estates of the deceased and their distribution to the heirs and personally decided the claims presented before him. On this occasion, he appointed Muaviya to be governor of Syria in place of his deceased brother Yezid.

CHAPTER XXV.

The conquest of Egypt.

The conquest of Egypt was due to the enthusiasm and genius of Amr-al-Aas, the Commander of the Moslem army in Palestine. Born of a prostitute he could claim Aas, a nobleman as his father, whom he resembled very much in appearance. Before his conversion to Islam, he had given vent to his passions by satirising the Moslems. In later years he acted treacherously in declaring Muaviya as Caliph, but he was a wise statesman and a brave soldier. At the time of Hadzrat Omar's second visit to Syria, Amr-al-Aas, who in his commercial travels had witnessed the wealth and fertility of Egypt, asked the permission of the Caliph for the invasion of that country. At first Hadzrat Omar, who had seen in the holy Koran references to the grandeur and strength of the land of the Pharoas hesitated to accord his sanction, lest he should imperil the safety of an inadequate number of Moslems. But at the repeated request of Amr-al-Aas he gave his assent on the understanding that he was liable to be recalled. Many considerations weighed with the bold but cautious Caliph in giving such a qualified sanction. He had confidence in the indomitable courage and irrepressible enthusiasm

of his countrymen, who overturned the throne of Chosroes and humbled a successor of Cæsar but the dangerous and the mighty Nile was a great natural barrier. Moveover the Romans were likely to fight tooth and nail for the preservation of their granary. On receipt of the sanction, Amr-al-Aas with only 4,000 soldiers started for the invasion of Egypt which was then dotted with fortified towns and populous villages. Before he reached the Egyptian frontier, a messenger of the Caliph brought a letter to him. Fearing the risk of a recall he pushed on the march and did not read the letter till he reached the country of the enemy by way of Arish. The letter counselled a retreat in case the Egyptian boundary was not crossed; otherwise it commanded a vigorous invasion. As Amr-al-Aas was already in Egyptian territory he proceeded to attack Narma, now a heap of ruins, but then a populous town on the banks of the Mediterranean Sea, famous for the tomb of Galen. Here a Roman garrison opposed Amr-al-Aas. For a month engagements took place but at last the Romans were defeated.

Reduction of the fort near Memphis which was subsequently named Fostat.

The country up to Fostat, on the east bank of the Nile, now lay at the feet of the conqueror. Here was a fort which protected Memphis or Misr the ancient capital of Egypt, which was on the west side of

the river. Subjugating a few towns in the way Amr advanced towards the fort. Makawkus, the Governor of Egypt proceeded to the place, before the arrival of Amr, and strengthened the fortifications. The handful of soldiers with Amr was quite inadequate for the capture of the well-garrisoned fort. Amr was therefore obliged to request the Caliph for a reinforcement. In response to the appeal, Hadzrat Omar sent 10,000 soldiers under the command of the renowned warrior Zobeir. A siege under his supervision was undertaken but it made no impression on the fort, though it lasted for several months. Being tired of the long and fruitless siege, one day Zobeir with a few companions of the Apostle, made a bold assault. They climbed on the walls of the fort with unsheathed swords and raised the war cry. The entire Moslem army instantaneously took up the cry shaking the earth with their terrific voice. Being panic-stricken, the besieged soldiers left their posts. Zobeir descended hastily and opened the gate through which the Moslem army at once entered into the fort. Perceiving his dangerous position Makawkus sued for protection which was granted.

Capture of Alexandria in 21 A. H. or 642 A. D.

The surviving Greeks and Romans left the fort. Amr-al-Aas stayed for some time at the place which he afterwards named Fostat. From here he

sent information of the great victory to Hadzrat Omar and asked for permission to march upon Alexandria. When the sanction came, Amr marched towards Alexandria. Overcoming all resistance in the way, he invested the city which was then the second commercial port in the Byzantine empire. Two sides of the famous and rich city were protected by the sea and a lake, while the frontage open to the attack of an enemy was of a small length. Over and above this natural advantage of defence, the city had an abundant supply of provision and could always procure a supply of arms, men and food by the sea. The task before the Moslems was therefore an exceedingly difficult one. However the generous treatment, which the Copts received at the hands of the Moslems and the inequities which they had suffered from the Greeks and the Romans easily won them over to the cause of the invaders. Makawkus, who was a Copt and a vassal of the Romans, was willing to come to terms with the Moslems, but could not conclude peace for fear of the Romans. He therfore pursued a middle course and became almost neutral. He solicited Amr for the protection of the Copts, who on their part gave assistance to the Moslems in procuring provisions, in making roads and in other matters. The Romans from their protected and strong position made sorties at frequent

intervals and thus severe engagements took place at times in which Amr always took the leading part and would be invariably seen in the front line. One day the opposing forces were engaged in a hand-to-hand fight. The Moslems fought with prodigious valour and pressing the Romans and Greeks entered into the fort. Within the fort itself the engagement was most terrible of all. The Romans gained lost ground and drove back the Moslems and closed the gate. By chance Amr-al-Aas and Moslemah and two other persons remained inside the fort. The Romans attempted to oapture them but they fought so desperately and caused such a havoc that the Romans thought it prudent to settle the issue by a duel between two warriors, one on each side. Amr-al-Aas gladly accepted the offer, but Moslemah intervened and took the field against the Romran adversary. The two combatants long fought a fierce fight, but in the end the Roman was worsted. Amr-al-Aas of whose rank the Romans were ignorant, thus secured his own release and that of his companions.

As the siege prolonged, Hadzrat Omar became impatient. In a mood of anger he wrote to Amr that the Arabs had become effeminate on coming into contact with the Romans and ordered an immediate attack with all available

force. The words of the great Caliph infused a new spirit into the heroes of the Syrian war, while the fabulous wealth of the city and the uncommon fertility of the country led them to make one supreme effort for the rare prize. Amr delivered a stirring address to the soldiers and led an attack with the men under his command. The city which according to the estimate of Amr-al-Aas contained four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, four thousand theatres or places of amusement, twelve thousand shops and forty thousand tributary jews fell under the splendid charge of the Moslems and the standard of Islam began to fly over Alexandria after a siege of fourteen months. A messenger was immediately despatched to Medina to inform Hadzrat Omar of the glorious victory. As the man reached Medina at midday, he did not think it proper to disturb the Caliph in his rest, but the latter coming to know of the arrival of the messenger at once sent for him. Hearing of the glorious victory for which he had spent many anxious days, the pious Caliph prostrated himself on the ground in token of thanks giving to the great Almighty who had granted the same. He then expressed his surprise that the messenger thought that he could take rest at the hour with all the burdens of the Caliphate upon him. He directed Amr-al-Aas to see that the city was not pillaged and that its wealth was reserved for

the public service and the propagation of the faith.[1]

Completion of the conquest of Egypt.

After the capture of Alexandria Amr-al-Aas returned to the fort, near Memphis where he had camped once before, and built a town there and gave it the name of Fostat or "Encampment." The town soon expanded, as it became the capital of Egypt and is now known as Cairo or Cahira or the City of Victory. With the conquest of Alexdandria, the backbone of all serious resistance was broken. Small bodies of soldiers were sent out in all directions to drive out the Romans and the Greeks. The Copts everywhere gladly agreed to pay the Jizia. In short the whole of Egypt from the Mediterranean Sea on the north to Abyssinia on the south and from the Isthmus of Suez on the east to Lybia on the west came under Moslem rule. As in other places, the administration of the country was taken in hand immediately after the conquest. The Copts were accorded a generous treatment on account of the sympathy they displayed towards the Moslems.

1. The story of the burning of the Alexandrian Library under the orders of Hadzrat Omar has no foundation in truth. A large part of the Library was destroyed at the time when Julius Cæsar underwent a siege in the town and the remainder met the same fate under the orders of Emperor Theodosius who being a bigoted Christian ordered the destruction of the writings of the pagans. Nothing was therefore left for the Moslems to destroy even if they could be guilty of such a barbarous act. (*Vide* "A Short History of the Saracens" by the Right Hon'ble Mr. Ameer Ali, p. 42.)

Lands were left in the hands of the cultivators; irrigation works were improved, an ancient canal connecting the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea was re-excavated, steps were taken to foster trade and the taxes imposed were light.

A large number of Copts, taken prisoners in the war, had been made slaves. Under the orders of Hadzrat Omar they were set at liberty and were given the option of professing their own religion on payment of the Jizia or of acquiring all the rights of a Moslem by embracing Islam. On account of their association with the Moslems many of the Copts realised the truth and beauty of Islam and voluntarily professed it.[1]

[1] Ibn Khuldun, whom I have generally followed, has given a somewhat different version of the conquest of Egypt. Sir W. Muir seems to have adopted that version. The account here given will be found in Moulana Shibli's al-Faruq.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF HADZRAT OMAR.

Causes of the rapid growth of the Moslem empire.

Within the short space of about 10 years and a half, Hadzrat Omar founded an empire which consisted of Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Faris, Khorasan, Kerman, Mukran and Khuzistan. The area of this vast empire was about 2,250,000 square miles or almost eleven times the area of either France or Germany. It was as large as the Indian empire including Burma and a third part of it again. It will thus be seen that the Arabs conquered in ten years what had taken other nations a hundred years. This rapid growth of the empire, unparalleled in the history of the world was due to various causes, but the most important factors were the valour and the religious enthusiasm of the Moslems and the wonderful ability and character of their Caliph Hadzrat Omar.

The Roman and the Persian empires which bordered Arabia were in a decaying state. Syria and Palestine were peopled by a mongrel race. The Bedouin Arabs professing Christianity formed a considerable part of the population. It is true that these provinces boasted of churches, columns, theatres, markets, roads, causeways

and aqueducts, the outward signs of civilisation, but the inhabitants lacked the partriotism and the manliness of the Romans, though they aped their luxuries. The Romans themselves lost their former patriotism and valour, while their hauteur and unjust treatment of the subject races alienated their sympathies. The population was further rent with schism. The orthodox Christians, the Eutychians and the Nestorians were at daggers drawn and they rejoiced in each other's chastisement and humiliation. The Romans were however well versed in the art of warfare and were better armed and better equipped than the Arabs. They also possessed vast numerical superiority. The Persian empire was also in a tottering condition inspite of outward pomp and splendour. Within three or four years of the death of Perwiz, the throne changed hands six or seven times. Corruption and intrigue were rife among ministers and generals. There was no solidarity in the empire. Most of the provincial governors simply paid tributes but were otherwise practically independent. Dehqans or the landlords trod over the peasants with iron heels. Hence the bulk of the people had no strong motive to fight with an external enemy. Again many Arab tribes, some of whom had sympathies with men of their own blood, were settled in Iraq as in Syria. On the other hand the Persians like the Romans were

better armed and better equipped and had the odds of number on their side. The above description is only one side of the picture. On the other side, we find that the Arabs were noted for their love of adventure and plunder. They never lived peacefully nor allowed others any peace. Slight causes led to tribal feuds and wars, which were often handed down from one generation to another. The noble teachings of Islam united them for the time being, made them righteous, improved their morality, burnt down their lower passions and fired them with enthusiasm for the propagation of the faith. They were determined to die or to win. Victory meant both riches and the spread of better religion, death was but the stepping stone to heavenly bliss. Ten Moslems with such splendid moral were equal to 100 half-hearted and faint-hearted Romans or Persians, as the battles of the Yarmuk and Qadisya have shown. If well handled, a nation imbued with such firm resolve could not but be invincible.

Fortunately the Moslems found an almost ideal leader in Hadzrat Omar. This great Caliph without the least thought of self-aggrandisement, devoted his marvellous industry and ability to the advancement of Islam and the welfare of the Moslems. His unselfishness, his simplicity and his justice coupled with his severity commanded the respect and implicit

obedience of the Arabs who were thus welded into one compact mass. Thanks to his wonderful power of organisation the Moslem fighting force was enormously increased. In fact the Arabs became a nation of soldiers and Arabia a vast camping ground. He gave directions for important campaigns and selected the best men for the various commands. Thus generalled the Moslem army with its firm resolve, unshaken loyalty and rare valour became an unbreakable military machine, leading to the extraordinarily rapid and extensive conquests.

All lands in the conquered provinces were wisely allowed to remain in the hands of the original cultivators almost on the same terms as before and sometimes even on better terms. Arabs were forbidden to acquire land on any account. Life and property were made safe, churches were declared inviolable and religious toleration was practised. These measures endeared the conquerors to the conquered and gave stability to the conquests.

The Caliphate of Hadzrat Omar was a period of incessant warfare. As battles followed battles in endless succession, the Arabs issued forth in a continuous stream from their homes with their families for the outlying provinces where they settled. The casualties of these innumerable battles were a severe drain upon the manhood of the nation and the race would

have soon dwindled into insignificance but for the fecundity of the Arabs. Before the advent of Islam, an Arab generally possessed several wives. The custom of the nation did not place any limit upon the number of wives. The Prophet limited the number to a maximum of four, but the female captives of war still remained lawful to them. The inclinations of the Arabs of the time and perhaps their necessities led them to take full advantage of the religious sanction and the race multiplied in spite of the wastage of constant warfare.

The form of Government.

The Arabs had no fixed form of Government nor did the then state of their society require any, but an inordinate love of liberty was their chief characteristic. They were as free as the desert air and could brook no control. The chief of a tribe who was selected by public opinion transacted tribal business in consultation with the elders. Hadzrat Omar was nominated by his predecessor and in form his government had the appearance of a despotic rule, but in spirit it was a democratic state with a tinge of socialism. He held himself as much amenable to the laws as the humblest Moslem citizen. In principle as well as in practice the revenue of the state was regarded as public property. Military and administrative expenses were the first charges on the public revenue, but the

balance used to be distributed on certain equitable principles among the whole nation. Many converts received pensions and destitute persons whether Moslems or not were supported by the state. The admirable example of a great nation dividing its revenue among its members has no parallel in history, though such a system is a dream of the socialists.

For the transaction of state affairs he used to consult the elders residing in Medina, who practically formed a consultative body called Majlis-us-shura. In matters of highest importance, he used to call great public meetings in which people from all parts of the country took part. The decisions of these meetings were respected by the Caliph.

Hadzrat Omar spared no pains to secure purity of administration as it was an essential element of good government. He divided the empire into provinces and districts and appointed officers for the administration of each division. In the appointment letter of each officer, his duties and responsibilities were set forth and these were at times, published by proclamation for the information of the public. The officers were enjoined not to employ sentinels at their gates, lest men having business might not have free access to them. They were instructed to lead a simple life and not to wear fine clothes, nor to eat bread made of fine flour, nor to ride

on showy horses. These instructions were not mere dead letters but were rigidly enforced in practice. When the Caliph heard of the gate, which Hadzrat Saad Waqqas, the hero of Qadisya, built in his house in Kufa evidently for posting sentinels therein, he ordered the structure to be set on fire at once. One day while walking in the market of Medina, he heard some one remark that Omar would not be exonerated by God merely because he framed certain wise rules for the guidance of his officers, while Ayaz the governor and conqueror of Mesopotamia was dressing himself gaudily and employing sentinels at his gate. The Caliph at once sent Muhammad, son of Moslemah (who used to be deputed for enquiry into the complaints against officers), to fetch Ayaz in the very condition in which he might be found. The governor was found dressed in rich showy clothes and brought before the Caliph in that garment. The Caliph ordered the clothes to be taken off his person and made him wear woolen garment and humbled him in other ways. Ayaz never in his life forgot the lesson which he was taught on this occasion.

Selection of able and honest officers.

Hadzrat Omar always took particular care in appointing able and honest men as his officers, for without such men mere rules however good, would not have been of much use. His

keen insight into human nature enabled him to employ the best available men in their proper places. He appointed Muaviya and Amr-al-Aas governors, because they were capable statesmen and administrators of a very high order; but he kept a strict control over them as they were likely to commit oppressions. Maady Karib and Tolayha were the bravest soldiers, but he never gave them the command of an army on account of their deficiency in the powers of organisation and other necessary qualifications of a general. In the matter of patronage he would not show the least partiality to his friends or relatives. For all these reasons his selection of governors and generals generally turned out happy and successful. Occasionally he appointed officers on the recommendation of the public, as was the case with Saad bin Abi-Waqqas. At times, he allowed a province to nominate its own officers.

In spite of his carefulness to appoint the best persons, mistakes were sometimes made. After the death of Otba, he appointed Mughira bin Shaaba as governor of Bussorah. The governor-elect with one eye and red hair was a man of repulsive appearance. In his youth he had committed a murder at Tayif and his nature did not undergo any change for the better inspite of the ennobling influence of Islam. He could boast of eighty wives and slave girls in

his harem. Notwithstanding all these defects, he was selected on account of his ability and strength of character. He however, soon came to grief, as he was accused of adultery and recalled to Medina. According to Mahomedan law four witnesses were required to prove the offence. The evidence of Ziad the fourth witness being unsatisfactory, Mughira was acquitted but he was relieved of his charge and Abu Musa of the tribe of Ashar was appointed in his place. The new governor was a man of Yemen and one of the early converts who had migrated to Abyssinia. He possessed great courage though he was a short-statured man of unimposing appearance. He had shown his powers in the fields of Hunayn and Autas. In the latter field he had taken up the banner of his dead uncle, and routed the enemy. He had once been selected by the holy Prophet as an envoy at Hadzramaut. In his new capacity of a governor he subdued the Kurds of Ispahan but he was recalled to Medina because some frivolous charges were preferred against him. Hadzrat Omar who in his endeavour to maintain an ideal standard of justice, could not overlook even petty complaints against his officers, inquired into the matter personally. The charges against him were that he had used some noble captives as his personal attendants, had given a reward of Rs. 1,000 dirhems to a poet, had

employed Ziad bin Samia for the discharge of his important functions and had provided a slave girl with rich clothes. Abu Musa's reply to the charges was that he had paid the ransom for the captives, out of his private purse, that he had given the reward to the poet to silence his malicious criticisms and that he had employed Ziad on account of his ability. He kept silent as regards his treatment of the slave girl. The Caliph accepted his explanations and reinstated him in his Government but asked him to send the girl to Medina. Later on he was transferred to Kufa in order to replace Ammar bin Yasir.

This last-named officer had once been a slave at Mecca but was one of the early converts. On account of his priority in faith, the Caliph appointed him to the exalted position of a Governor. His incapacity was soon found out by the people over whom he was called upon to rule. At their instance, he was replaced by Abu Musa. Ere long, a complaint against Abu Musa Ashari to the effect that his slave insisted in purchasing fodder first of all, led to his retransfer to Bussorah. The transfer of a governor for such a trivial matter indicates a high conception of fairness and justice on the part of Hadzrat Omar. But however admirable such acts might have been in themselves, they taught the people to realise their power, and the abuse of that

knowledge became one of the causes of rebellion in later years, when death removed the strong hands of Hadzrat Omar from the affairs of state.

Adoption of the principle of high salary and other measures to secure good conduct of officials.

To keep the officers above temptation he fixed their pay on a liberal scale. It may be said to his credit that this principle of high salary came to be recognised in Europe centuries afterwards. In those days of low prices and simple habits, Amir Muaviya used to draw a salary of about Rs. 5,000 a month in addition to his share of the spoils of war. In this connection the Caliph had to contend with an unique difficulty, because some officer like Hadzrat Abu Obayda, the commander of the Syrian army, looked upon the acceptance of any remuneration for the performance of public duties as an unbecoming act. But by his arguments, the Caliph succeeded to persuade all except one gentleman to accept the salaries attached to their offices.

The Caliph instructed all his officers to come to Mecca at the time of the Hajj, when a vast concourse of men from all parts of the empire used to assemble there. He turned these occasions to advantage by personally conferring with his officers about the affairs of the different provinces and by inquiring from the congregation if any one had any grievance against the officers. On receipt of a complaint, he would,

as seen before, look into the matter and would bring the offending officer to book without any consideration of prestige, which carries so much weight even in the present age. On one of these occasions a certain person complained to him that an official inflicted 100 stripes on him without any rhyme or reason. The Caliph asked the injured man to whip the offending official then and there. Amr-al-'Aas stood up and represented that the execution of the orders would rob the officers of their dignity; but the stern Caliph remained inexorable and replied that no offence should go unpunished. At last Amr-al-'Aas succeeded in persuading the complainant to settle the case by paying him two gold coins for each stripe he received.

Under the orders of the Caliph, an inventory of the properties of an official was usually made at the time of his appointment. If the wealth of the officer subsequently increased disproportionately to his income the matter would be inquired into and the extraordinary gains if any, would be forfeited to the state. By all these means Hadzrat Omar maintained a high standard of integrity and efficiency among his officers.

Steps taken for the administration of impartial justice.

The Caliph took equal pains in the administration of impartial justice. None but highly respectable and learned persons were appointed Qaziz or Judges and the scale of their

salary was sufficiently high for decent and comfortable living. The unrivalled Qazi Sharih, whose name has become a synonym for perfection in legal knowledge, was one of the Judges. In the eyes of law all were equal and the strict but just Caliph left no stones unturned to enforce in practice that divine principle of equality. In order to test his judges, he sometimes appeared in the role of a litigant. Once a dispute arose between him and Ubbi-bin Kaab who took the matter before Qazi Zaid bin Thabit. When Hadzrat Omar appeared before the Qazi as a defendant, he was treated with undue respect. But the noble Caliph with his characteristic sense of justice observed that the Qazi's conduct was unfair. On the case being opened, Ubbi desired that the Caliph might be put on his oath. Zaid requested Ubbi not to press the point in respect of the Caliph. Hadzrat Omar was again displeased with the partial attitude of the Judge, whom he considered unworthy of his noble office.

The organisation of the army was a marvel.

The organisation of the army.

After the conquest of Iraq and Syria the officers of the army clamoured that the conquered countries should be given to them for their maintenance. The proposal did not commend itself to the Caliph, who was of opinion that the lands should be held by the state for public purposes. But on an important point of the

nature, he did not like to impose his own decision arbitrarily when a large body of public opinion was against his views. He called a meeting of the "Majlis-us-Shura." The debate on the subject continued for several days, when all on a sudden the Caliph remembered a verse of the holy Qoran in which the rights of future generations to the fruits of conquest were indicated. If the lands were divided among the soldiers of the time, the rights of future generations would cease to exist, hence they could not be divided. The authority of the divine book at once set the point at rest, and the lands were declared state property. This wise decision of the Caliph did away with the growth of feudal system with all its evil consequences.

In theory every Moslem was a soldier of Islam. Hadzrat Omar conceived the grand idea of reducing the principle into practice. Under his orders a register of all Arabs was opened and he fixed pension or stipend for each of them on three principles, *viz.*, proximity to the Prophet in birth, priority in the profession of Islam and meritorious military services. Hadzrat Abbas the uncle of the Prophet being the nearest of all his relatives, was awarded 25,000 dirhems a year. Hadzrat Ayeshah got 12,000 dirhems and each of the other widows of the Prophet was given 10,000 dirhems. The companions who

took part in the battle of Bedr received 5,000 dirhems each. The lowest amount was 200 dirhems for the common soldier. Stipends were also fixed for the wives and children of the Moslems and even for their slaves.

Thus the policy of the Caliph made the Arabs a nation of soldiers. For the preservation of their military character they were debarred by the Caliph from holding land in foreign countries. The principles adopted for the determination of the amount of stipend for each individual tended to avoid tribal jealousy, because social position of a person was not a factor in the matter. Unaware of the principles a few persons refused to take the stipends fixed for them, but when the rules of distribution were explained to them, they readily accepted the amounts offered. Though all the men entered in the register were liable to military duty some were constantly engaged in warfare and others were occasionally called upon to fight. The former class practically constituted what is now termed regular army and the latter class was something like the militia or the territorials. Some Persians, Greeks and Romans were also in the army, but their number was limited owing to the natural disinclination of these races to fight for Islam with as much enthusiasm as the Arabs. The stupendous task of writing up the register, which was practically

a register of the whole Arab nation, was facilitated on account of the tribal basis of Arab society. Whether at home or in foreign settlement, all the members of a tribe lived together and the military units were constituted on that basis. Hence the register was filled up tribe by tribe without the risk of any confusion. Alas this tribal basis of the society became in after years a fruitful source of jealousy and strife. As the soldiers on duty were provided with ration and uniform, several centres were fixed for the storage of grain. Medina, Kufa, Bassorah, Mosul, Fostat (modern Cairo), Damascus, Hims and Jordan were made principal army head-quarters. As a matter of fact Kufa, Bussorah and Fostat were founded for the residence of the soldiers. Commodious and healthy barracks were erected in all the eight principal centres and stables were built for horses. In each of these centres 4,000 horses with equipments were always held in readiness. Besides these principal centres, soldiers were located in many towns; especially those on the sea coast and on the boundaries of the empire. The organisation of the army was improved in other respects. Besides the centre, the right wing and the left wing, each army had its advance guard and its rear guard. A body of scouts, some physicians, a treasurer and an accountant accompanied each army. Proper arrangements were made for the supply of

provisions and intelligence. A detachment of soldiers were especially deputed for the construction of roads and bridges. In short all the principal departments now to be found in an well organised modern army were created by the heaven-born genius of Hadzrat Omar.

Revenue administration.

In fixing the revenue of the conquered countries the wonderful and versatile Caliph studied the system in vogue in each country and after consultation with local men made considerable improvements in those systems. He ordered a cadastral survey of Iraq and soon a complete record of the area and produce of each holding was made and many useful statistical informations were collected. Such informations are now being procured in some of the districts of Bengal but the collection of accurate agricultural statistics thirteen centuries ago, in the midst of constant warfare was little short of a miracle. When the varieties of crops became known, different rates of rent were fixed for different crops. Fallow culturable lands were assessed with nominal rent. The Dehqans or middlemen were allowed to remain in the enjoyment of their rights.

The land revenue of Iraq amounted to 8 crores and 60 lacs of dirhems in the first year of the settlement. On account of the fairness of the demand, the repairs of old irrigation works

and the construction of new ones, fallow lands came under cultivation and in the second year of the settlement the revenue rose to 10 crores and twenty-thousand dirhems and in subsequent years the revenue became still higher. Every year the Caliph used to question selected men from Kufa and Bussorah to satisfy himself that the realisation of the revenue did not cause hardship to any Moslem or non-Moslem. In Syria the lands were classified in accordance with the then existing practice and were assessed according to the quality of each plot. The result was a land revenue of 5 crores and eighty lakhs of rupees. In Egypt the produce varied greatly from year to year on account of the innundations of the Nile. For this reason he used to get an estimate of the produce every year from the heads of villages and fixed the revenue accordingly. Though this procedure annually entailed much trouble and labour, the Caliph deliberately adopted it for the sake of fairness. The land revenue alone yielded an income of about 5 crores and 6 lakhs of rupees. In Chaldæa and other places the old irrigation works were repaired and new canals and tanks were excavated. It is said that in Egypt alone one hundred and twenty thousand persons were daily employed for one year for the execution of such works. The fruits of the beneficent policy were soon visible in the considerable increase in the area

of cultivated lands and the prosperity of the revenue. Besides the land revenue, the Jizia, Zikat, Oshur and a fifth of the spoils of war were the other sources of income. The Jizia was a poll tax on non-Musalmans who were exempted from military service, the Zikat was a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. tax upon the moveable properties of the Musalmans; and the Oshur was a tax on trade. For the purposes of the Jizia and Zikat, a census of the population was taken and the whole fiscal system was placed on definite and equitable basis.[1]

Education.

Throughout the empire schools were established for the teaching of the holy Koran. Arabic literature was also taught in these centres. The teachers were paid by the state and in the beginning stipends were granted to the students for their encouragement. Along with the teaching of the Koran steps were taken for the instruction and dissemination of the Feqah or religious and civil laws. In Damascus 1,600 students used to learn under the famous professor Abu Darda. A few travelling teachers were appointed to examine the wandering Bedouins in the holy Koran. Total ignorance of the divine book was made punishable. In an age of religious fervour, when men used to live and die for its sake, a dominant

[1] A dirhem is about a fifth part of a rupee. The land revenue-figures have been taken from Moulana Shibli's Al Faruq.

religion could not but impose some restrictions upon others. Hadzrat Omar in his religious zeal forbade the construction of new churches but his other restrictions were wise and reasonable. To promote the cause of temperance, he interdicted the sale of liquor. Such measures are now being adopted in some advanced countries in the world. To mark out the different races, he ordered each race to wear its own costumes. Thus the Arabs could not wear the dress of non-Arabs and *vice versa.* The show of the cross in a company of Moslems and the use of musical instrument at the time of Moslem prayers were prohibited. The Caliph expelled the Jews of Khaybar and Fedak and the Christians of Najran from Arabia, but this action was based on political grounds. When Khaybar was conquered, the Jews were allowed to hold lands, on the understanding that they were liable to expulsion. In the time of Hadzrat Omar they threw down Omar's son Abdullah from a terrace and misconducted themselves in other ways. They were therefore expelled. The Christians of Najran were guilty of high treason. They secretly collected men, arms and horses to fight with the Moslems. A modern state would have crushed them and caused bloodshed for such an act, but Hadzrat Omar simply expelled them from Yemen and settled them in Iraq and Syria,

gave them lands and remitted the Jizia for two years.

Hadzrat Omar's treatment of the non-Musalmans.

On the whole the great Caliph's dealings with the non-Musalmans was marked by that high sense of justice which was one of his prominent characteristics. He granted them full religious toleration, recognised the sanctity of their places of worship and secured to them their religious endowments. They were allowed to remain in the possession of their estates and Moslems were forbidden to purchase their lands. He dispensed equal justice between man and man without any distinction of creed or colour. A person of the tribe of Bakr bin Wail who had murdered a Christian, was handed over to the heirs of the deceased for condign punishment. He granted pensions to aged and decrepit non-Musalmans along with the Moslems. Pensions of this nature are rare even in some of the most civilised countries of the present age. Impartial acts like these captured the hearts of the non-Musalmans. Thus it was that they wept over the departure of the Moslems and prayed for their speedy return when Hadzrat Abu Obayda had to evacuate a town in order to concentrate his force on the eve of the battle of Yarmuk and thus it was that the Copts helped the Moslem advance in Egypt.

Miscellaneous.

The activity of Hadzrat Omar manifested itself in various directions. A canal of the length of 69 miles known as Nahr-Amirul Momenin was excavated joining the Nile with the Red Sea for transporting grain from Egypt. This great work was executed in the incredibly short period of six months. For the supply of pure water, a canal of the length of nine miles, known as Nahr-Abi Musa after the name of Abu Musa, the governor, was dug from the Tigris to Bussorah. Governor's residences, court buildings, treasury buildings and jails were constructed. Under his order a mosque was built in each of the towns of Syria. Even up to the present day these are known as Jaamay Omri or the cathedral mosque of Omar. About 4,000 mosques were built during his caliphate in the different parts of the empire. Rest houses for travellers were erected throughout the length and breadth of the empire, those of Kufa and Medina being most famous; fountains, rest houses and guard buildings were constructed in all the halting places on the way from Medina to Mecca. The yard of the holy Kaaba was extended by the purchase of adjacent houses, walls were raised to mark out the sacred precincts of the Kaaba and the buildings therein were enlarged. Pillars were erected to demarcate the sacred territory extending from 3 to 9 miles from the Kaaba in

different directions, wherein bloodshed is unlawful. The apostolic mosque in Medina was made more commodious.

Under his orders several new towns, *viz.*, Kufa, Bussorah and Fostat were built. The most important of these was the town of Kufa, the site of which was a beautiful one. It was about 2 to 3 miles from the Euphrates and contained the ruins of the ancient capital of Numan bin Munzir. The famous palaces of Khawarnaq were near the town. The cathedral mosque of the place accommodated forty thousand persons and the principal roads were 60 feet broad and the narrowest lanes were 10 feet wide. Twelve thousand persons of Yemen and eight thousand persons of the Nizar tribe settled there, besides several other tribes. Each tribe resided in a separate part of the town and each had a separate mosque for its use. At first the dwelling houses were made of reed, but on account of frequent outbreaks of fire, they were subsequently made of brick. The town soon became a populous and prosperous seat of learning and commerce and produced men like Imam Abu Hanifa and Abdul Aswad Duwaayli, the grammarian.

The conclusion.

The brilliant and beneficent career of Hadzrat Omar was cut short by the hands of an assassin. A Persian slave named Firuz stabbed him with a spear

while he was conducting the morning prayer in the Apostolic mosque. The Caliph succumbed to the injuries on 6th Zulhaj of the year twenty-third Hegira. While lying fatally wounded he inquired who his assailant was and on learning that the miscreant was not a Musalman he offered thanks to God that a believer was not his murderer. With characteristic unselfishness, he on his death-bed did not nominate his son Abdullah to the Caliphate, but named a committee of 6 persons consisting of Hadzrat Aly, Othman, Zobeir, Talha, Saad Waqqas and Abdur Rahman for the election of a Caliph from amongst themselves. With his martyrdom ended the life of one of the noblest and greatest of human beings that ever graced the surface of this globe. Within a brief but glorious reign of 10 years and a half, he humbled the proud and mighty Roman empire and overturned the ancient Persian throne. With a rapidity never witnessed before in the history of the world, he extended Moslem rule from Tripoli on the west to the borders of Baluchistan on the east. He organised a powerful and efficient army; placed the land revenue on a fixed and equitable basis, constructed roads, canals, irrigation works, rest houses and mosques on an extensive scale; secured purity in the administration of justice, provided free education and diffused the knowledge of the holy Koran and of Islamic laws;

established in practice the equality and brotherhood of all Moslems; granted pensions to the old and the decrepit; guaranteed religious toleration and other privileges to the non-Moslems; distributed the surplus revenue among the Moslems of Arabia according to just rules; lived an exceedingly simple life and devoted himself solely to the cause of the Moslems without any thought of self-aggrandisement. You will turn in vain the pages of history to find his equal. May his pious and simple life inspire the present-day Moslems and the generations yet to come.[1]

[1] Firuz had complained to the Caliph saying that his master demanded more money from him than he could earn. The Caliph after questioning Firuz held that his complaint was not reasonable. This decision enraged the slave and led him to commit the diabolical act.

HADZRAT OTHMAN

CHAPTER XXVII

A General Sketch of the Life of Hadzrat Othman.

Hadzrat Othman's birth and physical features.

Hadzrat Othman was born in the 6th year of the Elephant, that is, 575 A. D. He was an Omaiyad being a son of Affan bin Abi-al-Aas bin Omaiya. His mother Arwa was a daughter of Umm Hakim, sister of Abdullah, the father of the Prophet. He was therefore a nephew of the holy Prophet and was sometimes known by the appellation of Abu Abdullah. He received the title of Zinnurain or "the Possessor of two Luminaries," as he married two daughters of the holy Prophet. He possessed a beautiful appearance but bore faint marks of small-pox. His cheeks were white with a slight tinge of red, his forehead was high; his eyes were bright and his beard was long and thick.

His learning.

Very little is known of the early life of Hadzrat Othman or of any other prominent Moslem of the time. He was one of the few men of letters among the Koreish and was the first man to learn the holy

Koran by heart. He was at times employed by the holy Prophet as his Secretary. His voice was sweet and his reading of the holy book impressed the mind of his audience. He taught the divine book and the hadis (or the sayings of the Prophet) to several persons. He related 172 hadis or traditions on his own authority. An idea of his accomplishment and mental powers may be formed from his sayings, a few of which are quoted below :—

(1) Four things are useless, namely (*a*) knowledge without practice; (*b*) wealth without expenditure; (*c*) piety behind which is worldliness; (*d*) and longevity at the end of which is no stock of good acts.

(2) In the world, I love three things, namely (*a*) to feed the hungry; (*b*) to clothe the naked; and (*c*) to read and teach the holy Koran.

(3) Fear the God to whom you will be gathered. Do not run towards quarrel and do not create difference where unity prevails.

(4) Under all circumstances, a person should be patient, otherwise disgrace would be his lot.

(5) The thought of the spiritual world sheds light on the soul, but the thought of the terrestrial world casts darkness thereon.

(6) A person should acquire two habits—pure words and proper deeds.

(7) Acquire wisdom from the story of the dead. . . .

(8) The world is proud, therefore leave it alone, lest it entrap you by its guise and teach you pride, which will keep you away from God.

(9) Viewed superficially four things are beautiful, but in reality those very things are necessary:— (*a*) To associate with the worthy is laudable, but to follow them is essential; (*b*) to read the Koran is virtue, but to obey it is incumbent; (*c*) to visit the sick is meritorious but to cause them make their behest is necessary; (*d*) to visit the holy shrines is piety, but to be prepared for death is imperative.

(10) I feel surprised at the conduct of the person who knows death to be certain, yet he does not take it seriously; who knows the world to be transient yet he loves it; who believes in hell, yet he commits sin; who believes in the existence of God, yet he seeks assistance from others; who is aware of paradise, yet he is engaged in worldly pleasures; who knows Satan to be his enemy, yet he obeys his dictates; who believes in predestination, yet he feels aggrieved with what happens; who knows that account is to be rendered in the day of resurrection, yet he hoards wealth.

Profession of Hadzrat Othman and his private charities.

Hadzrat Othman started life, as a draper, opened transactions with different countries, amassed a large fortune in the business and became one of the millionaires of the country.

But he made good use of his money and never disappointed a supplicant. He invariably subordinated his own needs to those of others. At one time there was in Medina only one well named Ruma, which was the property of a Jew who would not allow the free use of it. For this reason Moslems of limited means, who were unable to purchase water, experienced great hardship. Hadzrat Othman purchased it for thirty-five thousand dirhems [1] and dedicated it to the free use of the public.

In consequence of scorching heat, drought and unprecedented scarcity, great difficulty was experienced by the Prophet in procuring provisions and equipment for the army which was to march to Tabuk. In fact the army came to be known as the "army of distress," on account of the hardships, which it suffered subsequently. When the army was being formed, the holy Prophet exhorted his followers to make voluntary contributions, so that the needs of the army might be removed. Hadzrat Othman's gift, which was the highest received on this occasion, consisted of 300 camels with their equipment.[2] The generous contribution gave immense pleasure to the holy Prophet, who exclaimed "Othman will not be judged, whatever he may do after this day."

[1] Sir William Muir in his Life of the Prophet says that the well was purchased for 400 dinars, that is about 8,000 dirhems.

[2] In some traditions it has been said that his gift was 1,000 dirhems.

The apostolic mosque of Medina soon became too small for the growing Moslem community. Hence one day the holy Prophet observed that paradise was in store for the man who would purchase certain houses for the extension of the mosque. Hadzrat Othman at once purchased them for twenty or twenty-five thousand dirhems and made a free gift of them for the noble object. During the Caliphate of Hadzrat Omar, Zinnurain suggested that the roof of the mosque, which leaked awfully during the rains, should be made of brick and mortar, but the Caliph did not approve of the suggestion because in his opinion the public money was for the soldiers and the poor and not for brick and mortar. In his own caliphate, he extended and reconstructed the mosque with brick and mortar out of his private purse.

Once a famine occurred in the caliphate of Hadzrat Abu Bakr. On this occasion one thousand measures of grain was imported by Hadzrat Othman. Some merchants of Medina approached him and offered to purchase the grain for the benefit of the poor on giving him a profit of 50 p.c. Hadzrat Othman asked for a profit of 1000 p.c. which the merchants naturally declined to pay. He forthwith declared that he would make a free gift of the grain for distribution among the poor, as he believed that his Lord would give him the thousandfold profit.

On account of his generosity, Medina became crowded with liberated slaves, because he used to set free one every Friday. In spite of his large-hearted and unstinted charities, he left at the time of his death one lac and five hundred dinars, ten lacs of dirhems, one thousand horses, one thousand slaves and immovable property in Khaybar and Wadi-al-Qora.[1]

His simple mode of living.

Hadzrat Othman led an exceedingly simple life. He used to wear a pair of coarse trousers worth four or five dirhems, a shirt worth about eight dirhems and a sheet of about the same value. He served rich dishes to others, but his own meal was simple. Generally he used to eat bread with vinegar and olive oil. He was constantly in awful fear of his Lord and wept bitterly at the thought of death. He slept very little at night, but spent his time in prayers. He would frequently finish the whole Koran in two prostrations. Forgiveness and forbearance were part of his nature. He would readily pass over the faults of his slaves and others and would not oppress any one. As will appear hereafter, he exhibited the highest limit of forbearance when he preferred to be killed rather than order his friends and emancipated slaves to fight with the rebels. Once he asked one of his slaves to pull

[1] The figures are given in Tajul Orus. They have been exaggerated but nevertheless they give some idea of the wealth of Hadzrat Othman.

him by the ears in retaliation for a similar punishment suffered by him. The slave in obedience to his master's desire pulled his ears gently but Hadzrat Othman insisted that his ears should be pulled with as much force as was used to the slave.

He led a chaste life and never touched wine even in the days of Ignorance (*i.e.*, pre-Islamic period). He married 7 wives and left several children. Hadzrat Roqaiya and Umm Kulthum, daughters of the holy Prophet were two of his wives.

His conversion.

When Hadzrat Othman was away in Syria with his merchandise, the Apostle received the divine commission of teaching Islam. On his return, Hadzrat Abu Bakr with all his charming persuasion presented Islam to him. Hadzrat Othman, who had no regard for idolatry and its rites, readily responded to the appeal and embraced the faith. His uncle Hakam-bin-al-Aas who became enraged at his conversion, fettered his legs with an iron chain and told him that severer punishment would be inflicted, if he did not give up his new religion. But he was as firm as adamant. He told his uncle that he would not forsake the true God and his Prophet even if he were beheaded. On the contrary he requested his uncle to profess the true faith. When three or four days passed

in this way and the resolution of Hadzrat Othman remained unshaken, his uncle set him free.[1]

His migrations and his life thereafter.

In the fifth year of the ministry, the holy Prophet advised some of his followers to migrate to Abyssinia in order to avoid the persecutions of the Koreish. Hadzrat Othman and his wife Hadzrat Rokaiya were among the emigrants. After a lapse of time, the emigrants learnt that peace had been concluded between the Moslems and the Koreish and hence they set out for Mecca. In the way the news transpired to be false, but Hadzrat Othman with his wife repaired to Mecca, as he did not consider it worth the trouble to go back to Abyssinia. In the thirteenth year of the ministry, he with his wife again left his birthplace for Medina. In the second year of the Hegira, the famous battle of Badr was fought, but on account of the illness of his wife Rokaiya, Hadzrat Othman could not take part in the action. In fact the good lady was being buried, when the news of victory reached Medina. On account of the special circumstances of the case the Prophet classed Hadzrat Othman as a combatant and gave him a share of the booty. In the 6th year of the Hegira, when the prophet reached Hudayba,

[1] This story has been narrated in Suyuti's History of the Caliphs; but not with so many details.

with the object of performing the omra or lesser pilgrimage, Hadzrat Othman was selected, on account of his influence and popularity, as an envoy to Mecca in order to persuade the Meccans to allow the peaceful performance of the ceremony. As the Koreish proved obdurate, he had to return unsuccessful to the camp at Hodayba. When there was delay in his return, it was rumoured that he had been murdered. The prophet himself suspecting foul play, took his stand under the shade of an acacia tree and obtained from his followers the oath of fighting to death. This pledge is known as Baitur-Razwan or "the pledge pleasing to God." It is also called the pledge of the Tree.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CONQUESTS OF HADZRAT OTHMAN.

The selection of Hadzrat Othman to the Caliphate in Moharram of 24 A. H. or Novr. 644 A. D.

Hadzrat Omar in his death bed had appointed a committee of six persons, namely, Hadzrat Othman, Aly, Zobeir, Saad, Abdur Rahman bin Auf, and Talha to select a Caliph from among themselves. In case of equality of votes, his son Abdullah was to have a casting vote which was to be given on the side of Abdur Rahman bin Auf. Talha was absent from Medina at the time. The other electors met in a chamber close by. Abu Talha, a warrior of note was instructed to keep watch at the door, so that no other person might enter into the room. The electors were soon embroiled in a hot discussion, the noise of which reached the ears of the Caliph, who directed that the committee should then dissolve and assemble again after his death. The committee was also to make its choice within three days even if Talha failed to appear by that time and the new Caliph should without fail assume his office on the fourth day. When the electors again assembled after the death of

the Caliph, they began to wrangle. Two days were spent in fruitless discussions. At last Abdur Rahman bin Auf with considerable patriotism and self-denial offered to elect a Caliph on the understanding that he was not a candidate for the Caliphate. The offer was accepted by the Committee. Most of the provincial governors, captains and chiefs, who came for the pilgrimage, happened to be in Medina at the time. Abdur Rahman conferred with all of them and the leading men, who were then present in the city and sounded their views. On the third day Abu Talha warned the electors that they should without further delay come to a decision which should be announced in the following morning. Abdur Rahman spent the whole night in visiting the electors. He had long conference separately with Hadzrat Aly and Othman. The choice lay between these two gentlemen. Each admitted that the claims of the other were in weight next to his own. In the next morning at prayer time, a large expectant crowd assembled in the great apostolic mosque to hear the decision of the umpire. Addressing the assembly Abdur Rahman bin Auf said, that it was high time for the governors, captains and chiefs to return to their respective posts and asked their advice in the matter of the selection of a Caliph. Ammar, the ex-Governor of Kufa, adviced the

election of Hadzrat Aly in order to avoid a split among the Moslems. Another citizen supported him. Abdullah bin Saad bin Abu Sarh with equal vehemence nominated Hadzrat Othman on the same ground of unity among the believers. The adherents of each candidate waxed warm and began to abuse each other. Fearing a disorder Saad Waqqas requested the umpire to finish the business soon. Abdur Rahman approached Hadzrat Aly and inquired of him if he would accept the caliphate on condition of acting according to the divine book, the precedents of the Apostle and the two preceding caliphs. Hadzrat Aly replied, "I shall do so, as far as I am able, according to my capacity and power." He put the same question to Hadzrat Othman, who accepted the terms unconditionally. Abdur Rahman therefore saluted Hadzrat Othman as the Caliph. The public followed his example. Hadzrat Aly and his party also swore allegiance, but they were dissatisfied. Hadzrat Othman was thus selected Caliph on the first of Moharram of the twenty-fourth year of the Hegira. When Talha returned, he too accepted the selection.

It has been seen that the new Caliph was noted for his generosity, his kindness and his purity of character. His first public act as a Caliph was in consonance with his kind nature. On the day following the murderous attack upon Hadzrat Omar, his son Obaidullah had

heard that Hormuzan, a Persian Prince, who had professed Islam on being brought to Medina as a captive, had been seen talking with Abu Lulu *alias* Firuz the murderer of the late Caliph, that Abu Lulu had then possessed the same poniard with which the murder had been committed, that Hormuzan had examined it and returned it to Abu Lulu and that the men had separated on seeing Abdur Rahman bin Abu Bakr and the poniard had fallen from the hand of the would-be assassin. The story was too much for the mental equilibrium of Obaidullah who thought that Hormuzan had been at the bottom of the murder of his father and in a fit of anger attacked him with a sword causing his death. When the case came up before the Caliph, Hadzrat Aly in accordance with the Mohammadan Law advised the award of capital punishment, as there was no evidence to prove the complicity of Hormuzan. Amr-al-Aas thought that the suggested sentence was too severe for a man whose father had been murdered a short time ago. The opinion of Amr-al-Aas was in harmony with the feeling of the good-natured Caliph. He liberated Obaidullah and out of his private purse paid compensation for the murder.

Repulse of a Roman attack upon Alexan- - in 25 A. H. or 646 A. D.

On his elevation to the Caliphate, Hadzrat Othman had to suppress resurrection abroad as it had been the lot of Hadzrat Abu Baks,

to quell rebellion at home. In 25 A. H. Heraclius at the invitation of the Romans in Alexandria, sent a large force for the reconquest of the port. The Romans of Alexandria joined the invading army, but Mokawkus the Coptic chief, remained steadfast in his loyalty to the Moslems. Thus failing to enter Alexandria, the Romans penetrated into the interior, but being defeated by Amr-al-Aas, they hastily retreated. The Moslems pursued the Romans and crushed them. After the victory Amr-al-Aas, restored to the Copts the properties, which had been previously plundered by the Romans but he demolished the walls of the city perhaps with the object that the Romans might not any longer take shelter therein.

Military operations in Azerbijan, Armenia and Asia Minor 25 A. H. or 646 A. D.

In pursuance of the direction of the late Caliph, Hadzrat Othman dispensed with the services of Mughira, the Governor of Kufa and reinstated Saad Abi Waqqas in his former office. To provide for his luxurious living, Sadd soon borrowed some money from Abu Masud the chancellor of the public treasury. As he could not repay the sum, Hadzrat Othman removed him from office and appointed Walid bin Oqba to the governorship of Kufa. About the same time he removed Otba bin Forqad from Azerbijan. As soon as Otba left Azerbijan, a rebellion

broke out there. Walid marched upon the country and by a surprise attack captured some towns. Impressed by the victories, Azerbijan sued for peace, which was granted on condition of paying the amount of the jizia previously fixed. Detachments of soldiers were then sent in all directions and the neighbouring country was subjugated.

Shortly after the above events, the Romans raised an army said to be 80,000 strong and threatened Syria through Asia Minor. Muaviya, the governor of Syria, informed Hadzrat Othman of the grave danger, Under the instructions of the Caliph, the Syrian army under the command of Habib bin Moslama set out to repel the enemy and Solman bin Rabia with about 8,000 men from the army of Kufa joined Habib. These two generals with the small forces under their command faced the Romans and defeated them. The Moslem generals thereafter bifurcated and proceeded in different directions, in their victorious career. Habib penetrated into Armenia as far as Tiflis and even reached the shores of the Black sea reconquering numerous towns in the way or realising the jizia. Tiflis and several towns and forts in the neighbourhood did not show any fight but accepted the usual terms of peace. Solman in an equally brilliant campaign subjugated the districts of Sharwan and Jabal. Armenia

and a portion of Asia Minor was thus pacified or conquered.

After the above events Muaviya led a force into Asia Minor. The Romans through fear evacuated the forts between Antioch and Tarsus, which were occupied by the Moslems.

Operations in Africa.

In 25 A. H. or 646 A. D. Abdullah Abi Sarh, a foster brother of the Caliph, received instructions for the conquest of North Africa up to the Atlantic Ocean for which deed he was to get one-fifth of the royal share of the spoils of war. This officer was an able writer and a famous horseman. The holy Prophet had selected him to write down the revelations but he had abused the trust and purposely recorded them incorrectly. Thereafter he fled to Mecca, where he held up the Prophet to ridicule reciting the distorted verses. Again on the conquest of Mecca, his head had been proscribed, but at the intercession of Hadzrat Othman, his life had been spared. In spite of his unenviable past career, Hadzrat Omar had appointed him lieutenant governor of Upper Egypt under Amr-al-As, because of his ability. In pursuance of the orders of Hadzrat Othman, Abdullah Abi Sarh now sent an army under the command of Otba bin Nafy and Abdullah bin Nafay for the invasion of North Africa. They subjugated

the outlying district but could not penetrate into the interior. Abdullah Abi Sarh therefore asked for permission to lead an army in person. The Caliph not only granted the permission, but sent a reinforcement from Medina, among which were men like Hadzrat Hasan, Hussain, Abdullah bin Abbas and Abdullah bin Omar.

Before Abdullah Abi Sarh could lead the expedition, an important change took place in his own status in the government of Egypt. The Caliph, probably on administrative grounds had placed Abdullah Abi Sarh in sole charge of the revenues of Egypt, as was the case in Kufa. Amr-al-Aas was naturally annoyed with the arrangement. "To be over the army," he exclaimed, "and not over the revenue was like holding the cow's horns while another milked her." He began to obstruct Abdullah Abi Sarh in his proceedings, and therefore the latter reported the matter to Hadzrat Othman, who removed Amr-al-Aas and made Abdullah the governor.

Abdullah Abi Sarh now marched to Barca with the army which came from Medina. Otba bin Nafy joined him here with the force under him. The combined army proceeded to Tripoli which the Romans evacuated. Abdullah Abi Sarh took possession of the country and marched upon North-West Africa. Gregory, the king of the country, who was a vassal of

the Romans, came out with an army said to be 120,000 strong. The Moslems had only 40,000 soldiers to oppose the vast army. Several fierce engagements took place without any decisive result. At last Gregory proclaimed a reward of one lac of gold pieces and the hands of his fair and accomplished daughter to the man who would bring to him the head of Abdullah Abi Sarh. In consequence of the proclamation and at the earnest request of his friends Abdullah Abu Sarh ceased to come out of his tent and in this way a long time elapsed. As Hadzrat Othman did not get any news from the front, he became anxious and sent a reinforcement under Abdur Rahman bin Zobeir. The newcomer advised Abdullah Abi Sarh to retaliate by a counter proclamation to the effect that a reward of one lac of gold dinars and the hands of the daughter of Gregory would be given for the head of Gregory. This proclamation had the desired effect of damping the spirit of Gregory. Abdur Rahman further hit upon a tactical plan, which ensured success. A large body of seasoned troops were kept in reserve and with the rest a fierce attack was commenced. The battle raged furiously till evening, when both sides being exhausted retired to their respective camps for rest. Just at this time another attack was made by the Moslems with fresh soldiers kept in reserve. The Romans could not withstand this unexpected attack.

They suffered a defeat with great slaughter and Gregory was killed by Abdur Rahman bin Zobeir, to whom was given the daughter of Gregory. An advance was next made to Sabitila,[1] the capital, which was captured after a short siege. An immense quantity of booty fell into the hands of the conquerors. Each horseman got three thousand dinars and each individual of the infantry got one thousand. The victorious Moslem army marched up to the frontier of Qafsa and reduced fort Ajam. In the end the people of West Africa obtained peace by agreeing to pay a tribute of ten lac and five hundred dinars.

Abdur Rahman bin Zobeir returned to Medina with the news of the victories and the usual state share of the booty, which was given by the Caliph to Merwan, a relative for an inadequate price. Abdullah Abi Sarh came back to his seat of government in Egypt after a campaign of about fifteen months. Ere long the Romans again attacked Northern Africa and eastablished their supremacy. No further steps were taken against them in the Caliphate of Hadzrat Othman.

The territorial jurisdiction of Muaviya, an Omaiyad, increased to a large extent in the Caliphate of Hadzrat Othman. In the beginning, Muaviya was governor of the districts of Damascus and Jordon,

Conquest of Cyprus
28 A.H. or 649 A.D.

[1] This town was about 150 miles to the south of Carthage.

but Hims and Kinsirin came under him, when Omir bin Saad resigned. On the death of Abdur Rahman bin Abi Alqima, Palestine also came under his governorship. About 28 A.H. or 649 A.D. Muaviya, solicited Hadzrat Othman's permission for an attack upon Cyprus by sea. This permission was given, but as the expedition was to cross the sea, an uncertain element, with which the Moslems were not up to then familiar, it was ordered that only those persons, who would volunteer their services, should be selected for the undertaking. Abdullah bin Qays led the Syrian soldiers, while a force from Egypt under Abdullah Abi Sarh landed in Cyprus. The Cypriots secured peace on undertaking to pay a tribute of 7,000 dinars a year, but they reserved the right of paying an equal sum to the Romans. No jizia was demanded, as the Moslems were not in a position to guarantee protection to them against the attack of the Romans. Abdulla bin Qays continued to cruise in the Mediterranean sea and fought fifty naval battles in all of which he was victorious. The Arabs thus became master of the sea as well. Once he landed with a few companions at Forma, where the enemy fell upon him in great number and killed him.

Another attack upon Alexandaria repulsed.

About 31 A.H. Constantine, a son of Heraclius, with 600 vessels attacked Alexandria. Abi Sarh who came with his force by the sea and

Muaviya who came at the head of the Syrian army made a combined attack upon Constantine. A fierce engagement ensued, but the Romans being defeated, Constantine fled to Syracuse, where the infuriated people assassinated him. This was the last Roman attempt upon that famous city.

Campaign in Persia.

In the fourth year of the Caliphate of Hadzrat Othman, Abu Musa, the governor of Bussorah set out to quell a rebellion in Persia. He had preached the virtue of leading a hardy life and going to war on foot. On the present occasion he induced them to march on foot but he himself employed forty asses to take out his camp requisites. The Arabs, who were accustomed to receive almost equal treatment with the governor were enraged at this conduct and repaired to Medina to prefer a complaint to the Caliph. After an inquiry Hadzrat Othman removed Abu Musa and appointed Abdullah bin Aamer to the vacant post. This young man of 25 years was a son of the maternal uncle of the Caliph. Hadzrat Othman made further changes by transferring Obaidullah bin Muammer to Faris and making Omir bin Othman bin Saad governor of Khorasan. Omir soon conquered all the country up to the river Fergahana.

Taking advantage of the changes, the people of Faris conspired to cast off the Moslem yoke

and raised an army to fight out the issue. Obaidullah bin Muammer drew up his forces in front of Istakhar, but in the action which followed, he was killed and his soldiers were dispersed. Hearing of the disaster Abdullah bin Aamer marched upon Istakhar and fought a terrible battle. Thousands of Persians were killed and the rest fled. Ibn Aamer next proceeded to reduce the other towns in Faris, but in the meantime Istakhar again revolted. It was reduced once more after a protracted siege and the chiefs and warriors of renown were put to the sword. Faris was now thoroughly crushed and could not raise its head again.

When Abdullah bin Aamer returned to Bussorah, he was advised to attack Khorasan, where a rebellion spread. Ibn Aamer with Ahnaf bin Qays proceeded towards Nishapur and commissioned Majasha bin Masud to suppress the insurrection in Kerman and set Rabia bin Ziad to a similar task in Sejistan. Many districts subordinate to Nishapur were subjugated and Nishapur itself was besieged. Four chiefs lived in the city. One of them offered to open the gate provided his safety was guaranteed. The proposal was accepted. According to pre-arrangements, the Moslems entered into the city on a certain night. The other chiefs, being thus taken aback, purchased peace

on a yearly tribute of 10 lacs of dirhems. Shortly after the capitulation of Nishapur, Tus and Herat followed the example. The tribute of Tus was 6 lacs of dirhems a year and that of Herat was 10 lacs. Ahnaf bin Qays, who had been sent to invade Tokharistan conquered Marv Roz and several other towns in the country and proceeded up to Balkh on which an annual tribute of 4 lacs of dirhems was imposed. The task of pacifying Sejistan fell upon Rabia bin Ziad. This lieutenant conquered numerous towns and defeated the citizens of Zeranj in a hotly contested battle outside the city. The defeated enemy took shelter within the walls of the city, which was besieged. Hard pressed by the siege, the Chief sought an interview with Rabia with the object of discussing terms of peace. When he reached the Moslem camp, he found Rabia seated on one corpse and leaning against another. This weird scene struck terror into the heart of the Chief, who readily agreed to deliver to the Moslems one thousand slave girls and one thousand gold cups, in order to secure peace. After a year's stay Rabia left Zeranj to see Ibn Aamer. As soon as he turned his back, the citizens rose up in arms and expelled the representative of Rabia.

Ibn Aamer now appointed Abdur Rahman bin Samra governor of Sejistan. The new governor lost no time in laying siege to Zeranj.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The citizens withstood the siege for a long time, but were at last obliged to buy peace on agreeing to deliver two lacs of slave girls and to pay two lacs of dirhems. Abdur Rahman reduced several other towns and then surrounded the idol worshippers living on Zor's hill. Entering into the temple of the idol Zor, with eyes of precious rubies and body of gold, Abdur Rahman picked out the eyes and cut the hands of the idol and handed them over to the Chief, remarking that he did not care for the articles, but disfigured the idol simply to show that it was powerless. About this time, discontent spread among the Moslems in some parts of the country so he left for Medina. The citizen of Zeranj rebelled again and turned out his deputy. Ibn Aamer now justly felt proud of his extensive conquests. He reconquered Faris, Khorasan, Kerman and Sejistan and added new territories to the empire. He therefore vowed to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca in order to express his gratitude to the Lord who had granted him the victories and with this object he left Nishapur for the holy city of Mecca.

One morning in 30 A H. or 651 A. D. Walid bin Oqba the governor of Kufa and an uterine brother of Hadzrat Othman led the prayers in a state of drunkenness and went beyond the fixed number of rikats or prostrations. His enemies therefore complained

against him and Hadzrat Othman not only removed him on account of intemperance but inflicted on him the legal punishment for drunkenness. Sayd bin al Asai, a kinsman of the Caliph was appointed to the vacant post. In that very year Sayd led an expedition against Jarjan a district of Tabaristan. The Chief of the district secured peace on payment of an annual tribute. Sayd next marched upon Tabaristan and reducing a town there returned to Azerbijan which was under his governorship. The inhabitants of Jarjan frequently rebelled and stopped the payment of the tribute, till they were finally subjugated later on.

Collision with the Turks; 32 A. H. or 653 A. D.

In 32 A. H. Qaran the king of the Turks invaded Khorasan. His army was swelled by rebels from Herat, Kohistan and other places and when he reached Khorasan, he was at the head of 40,000 soldiers. Qays bin-al Hathim was then governor of Khorasan. His cousin Abdullah bin Hazim, who had the reversion of the governorship in the absence of Qays, advised him to proceed to his immediate superior Ibn Aamer for help against the vastly larger army of the enemy. During the absence of Qays bin-al Hathim, Abdullah bin Hazim with only four thousand soldiers, attacked the Turks at night. Under his orders his men marched with torches made of their lances.

This stratagem giving the impression of innumerable lights and soldiers on all sides, discouraged the Turks, while Abdullah with 600 picked men attacked the enemy and gained a signal victory, in which Karan was killed.

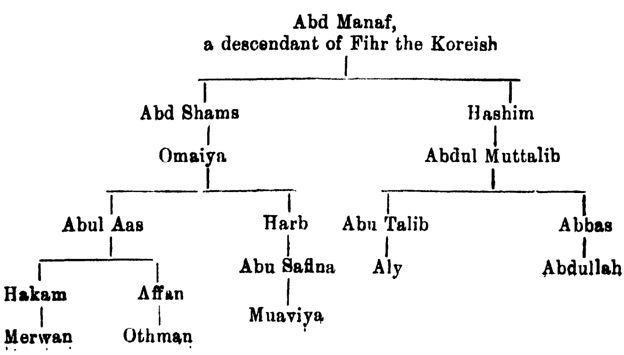
CHAPTER XXIX.

THE REBELLION.

Tribal Jealousy.

The account given in the preceding chapter exhausts all the important military operations that were undertaken in the caliphate of Hadzrat Othman. Let us now turn to domestic affairs, which wore a serious aspect and led to the deplorable martyrdom of the venerable Caliph.

Tribal jealousy was one of the principal traits of the character of the Arabs. The noble influence of Islam had not sufficient time to eradicate it root and branch. Traces of the venom remained in the national character and were visible in a long-standing dispute between the houses of Hashim and Omaiya. Hadzrat Aly and Abdullah bin Abbas were prominent members of the former and Hadzrat Othman, Muaviya and Merwan of the latter. The relationship of the two houses will best appear from the following table:—



In addition to the jealousy between the two rival Koreish families, Arab tribes of Bani Bakr, Qodzaa, Kinda, Rabia and others whose swords had been mainly instrumental in conquering Chaldæa and the provinces of Persia, looked with disfavour upon the prominent position of the Koreish, whose members practically governed the empire. The constant wars, the firmness and the even-handed justice of Hadzrat Omar kept down the jealousies, but some of the acts of Hadzrat Othman rekindled them.

Hadzrat Othman's gift of public posts to his kinsmen.

The kind-hearted, but unfortunately weak Caliph, considered it his duty to patronise his relatives. Hence he bestowed on them important public offices and gave them money from the public treasury. He used to point out a verse of the holy Koran in support of his belief and lost no opportunity in executing his idea into practice. In 25 A.H. or 646 A.D. when Saad Waqqas was removed from the governorship of Kufa, Hadzrat Othman, as noticed before, appointed his uterine brother Walid to the post. Walid was an able general and a popular governor. He pacified Azerbijan and pushed his conquest to the farthest extremity of Armenia. He removed the gate of his residential building, so that the needy and the aggrieved might have easy access to him. But a prejudice existed against him. He was a son

of Oqba, who had been taken prisoner in the battle of Bedr and put to death. When about to be executed, Oqba had inquired who would take care of his children. The query had drawn forth from the Prophet the reply, "Hell fire." He was further suspected of intemperance on account of his association with the poet Abu Zaid, who was a reputed drunkard and who had been a Christian before his conversion. As a matter of fact Walid was removed from his office and was awarded the legal punishment, when a charge of drunkenness was proved against him. The enemies of the Caliph took advantage of these facts to create discontent.

It has been seen that in 26 A. H. the Caliph made Abdullah bin Saad bin Abi Sarh governor of Egypt by removing Amr-al-Aas, the crafty but able conqueror of Egypt. The dismissal of Amr-al Aas excited his passion to such an extent that he divorced one of his wives for no other reason than she was a relative of the Caliph. Abi Sarh was a foster brother of the Caliph. As seen before he had proved unfaithful to the Prophet who had entrusted to him the responsible duty of recording the revelations. Amar-al-Aas turned these incidents into a good lever for creating bad feelings against Ibn Abi Sarh and the Caliph. He further entered into correspondence with Saad bin Waqqas, the

victor of Qadisya and the conqueror of Madain, who too had been removed from office. About 27 A. H., the Caliph removed Abu Musa Ashari from Kufa, on account of complaints against him and appointed his maternal cousin Abdullah bin Aamer, a young man of 25 years. Though Ibn Aamer for the time being suppressed rebellion in several provinces of Persia, he placed his own creatures in command of those provinces. The appointment of these relations who were far from possessing very good moral character excited jealousy and discontent. The Arabs were however busily engaged in extensive military operations in Africa and other countries so the discontent did not gain much in intensity and volume. By the middle of Hadzrat Othman's Caliphate there was comparative peace. The expedition from Africa returned with success and the rebellion in Persia was quelled for the time being. The Arabs had now enough leisure; in fact they had no occupation when not engaged in war. Hadzrat Omar had interdicted them from holding land, except in rare cases. The state stipends and spoils of war were sufficient to maintain them with comfort and in a good many cases with luxury. They were therefore not under the necessity of working for their livelihood. Unfortunately none seems to have thought of finding out any useful occupation except war for

the nation, nor were the circumstances favourable to the growth of such an idea. In the next place the Arabs were accustomed to freedom of thought and were imbued with socialistic ideas. The institutions of Hadzrat Omar, who had not made the least difference between the most powerful and able governor and the humblest Arab and who had punished the slightest delinquencies on the part of a governor, made the people realise their strength. Under these circumstances, the Arabs began to criticise even petty faults of the governors and of the Caliph himself,—faults which go unnoticed even in the present age. One morning Walid bin Oqba conducted the morning prayer in a state of intoxication and performed four prostrations instead of two. His enemies preferred and proved a charge of drunkenness against him. He was consequently removed from office and recalled to Medina where he received 40 strokes with a pole, the useful punishment for such an offence. Sayd bin al Aasi a young, inexperienced and arrogant kinsman of the Caliph was appointed to the vacant post in 30 A.H. On reaching Kufa Sayd bin al Aasi offended his own party by washing the steps of the pulpit alleged to have been desecrated by his intemperate predecessor. He noticed that the influence of the early and worthy Moslems were in the wane and the ordinary soldiers, men of a later generation

were rising in power. He communicated the information to Hadzrat Othman and obtained his permission to distribute state patronage according to proximity of kinship with the Prophet, priority in the profession of Islam and ability. These were really the principles which Hadzrat Omar had followed in fixing stipends for the Arabs. The Kufans demurred to the proposition. About this time the Caliph gave some lands out of the crown lands to those Companions of the prophet, who agreed to migrate to Iraq and dispose of their properties in the Hijaz. This act, which practically meant the recognition of the superior claims of the Koreish caused much discontent and heart-burning.

Recension of the Koran, 30 A. H.

In the same year that is 30 A. H. Huzayfa came to Mecca and reported that the citizens of different towns had different readings of the holy Koran. The men of Hems held that their reading was correct, because they had learnt the Koran from Miqdad; the men of Bussorah declared that their reading was pure, because they had been taught by Abu Musa Aaḥari, while the Kufans stated that their reading was the best as Ibn Masud was their teacher. On account of the divergent readings Huzayfa urged the publication of an authoritative and correct version. The chief men of Medina

agreeing with this view, the Caliph appointed a committee of four men, *viz.*, Zaid bin Thabit, Abdullah bin Zobeir, Sayd bin al Aasi and Abdur Rahman bin al Harith, to bring out a correct edition and reconcile the discrepancies. Samples of the different manuscripts in use throughout the empire were collected and compared with the copy of the Koran which was in the possession of Hadzrat Hafsa and which had been compiled in the Caliphate of Hadzrat Abu Bakr. The discrepancies were reconciled and a correct edition was prepared. The existing copies of the divine book were ordered to be burnt and the new copies were issued. But in Kufa Abdullah bin Masud adhered to his own reading and persuaded others to follow him, until Hadzrat Aly in his Caliphate introduced the standard version of the holy book. Even for this highly meritorious act, the enemies of the Caliph found fault with him and brought against him the charge of sacrilege in burning down the old copies of the divine book.

Preaching of Abdullah bin Saba.

A jew of the name of Abdullah bin Saba *alias* Ibn-us-Sauda came to Medina and embraced Islam for the sake of filthy lucre, but he never became a true Moslem. About 30 A.H., he went to Bussorah and in the guise of preaching love for the family of the Prophet, he found

fault with the Caliph and his two predecessors and thus created disaffection. He invited the people to swear allegiance to the family of the Prophet and held that the Prophet like Christ would appear again. On account of his strange doctrines and preaching, he was by turn expelled from Bussorah, Kufa and Syria. At last he reached Egypt and continued to preach his doctrines there. The common people of several towns lent favourable ears to his sayings and began to correspond with each other on the subject.

Denunciations of Abu Zar Ghifary.

About this time Abu Zar Ghifary, an extremely pious man, figured prominently in Damascus. He vehemently denounced the palaces, the expensive costumes, the rich dishes and the luxurious habits of the Arabs of the time. "This gold and silver of yours," he thundered forth "shall one day be heated red hot in the fire of hell, and therewith shall ye be scared in your foreheads, sides, and backs, ye ungodly spendthrifts? Wherefore spend now the same in alms, leaving just enough for your daily bread, or else woe be to you in that day? " He held that no man should possess more money than what is sufficient for a day's expense. The excess over this amount should be distributed among the needy and the poor. Crowds assembled round him to hear his unique preachings and rejoiced in the prospect of sharing

the treasures of the rich. Muaviya on the complaint of several citizens reported against Abu Zar, whose doctrines were unpractical and dangerous. On receipt of the report, the Caliph summoned him to Medina. Here he had a quarrel about his doctrines with Kaab Ahbar, a Jewish convert, who dared to contradict him. He therefore abused and assaulted Kaab Ahbar to his heart's content and then with the permission of the Caliph removed to Rabza, a place in the desert of Najd, where be built a mosque. The Caliph gave several presents to him and granted a stipend for his maintenance. Abu Zar did not leave the place again but breathed his last there. The enemies of the Caliph found fault with him in this matter, alleging that he had banished a pious man. The lax and luxurious habits of the Syrian Moslems gradually penetrated into the sacred precincts of the Hijaz. With the approval of the pious men, the Caliph put down gambling and wagering. For this reason, the irreligious men became dissatisfied and swelled the ranks of the discontented.

Miscellaneous acts and incidents which created discontent.

Hadzrat Othman recalled his uncle Hakam bin Abul Aas together with his two sons Harith and Merwan from banishment and made the latter his chief adviser. He also sold to Merwan the state share of the spoils of Africa at the inadequate price of five lacs of

dirhems. These acts tended to create jealousy and discontent to a great extent. In 29 A. H. at the time of the pilgrimage, the Caliph pitched a tent between Mina and Arafa and offered full prayers there without any precedent. In 30 A. H. he made an addition to the Juma prayer, that is the prayer held on Friday, the Moslem sabbath—These innovations though harmless and unimportant in themselves were severely criticised even by such a man as Abdur Rahman bin Auf and created discontent among the religious. One of the favourite occupation of Hadzrat Othman was to excavate new wells or deepen old ones. In the abovementioned year, he took in hand the repairs of a well, known as Aris, which was at a distance of about two miles from Medina. While supervising the work, the Prophet's official signet ring which the Caliph was wearing, fell into the well. Though a diligent search was made, it could not be found. This incident being considered inauspicious increased the existing discontent.

The combined effect of all these incidents was a strong feeling of discontent in a limited circle of jealous and turbulent men. The feeling soon gathered strength. The disaffected men in the different parts of the empire began to correspond with each other. They formulated charges of oppression and improprieties

against the governors, found fault with the Caliph and demanded the dismissal of the governors. In a short time, the news reached the ears of the Companions in Medina. These gentlemen strongly advised the Caliph to send agents to different provinces to inquire into the actual state of affairs. The principal men of Kufa used to assemble every night in Sayd bin al Aasi's palace. They beguiled their time in hearing current news or discussing the genealogy of their contemporaries or in idle gossip. One night in the midst of conversation, Sayd who looked with contempt upon the Bedouins, remarked that "Sawad was the garden of the Koreish." Upon this Ashtar reproachingly replied that Sayd considered that Sawad to be the garden of the Koreish which the sword of other tribes had conquered. Others joined in this improper and unfortunate discussion. The head of the Police tried to stop with force the heated and unpleasant debate, so men fell upon him and thrashed him. After this incident, Sayd placed sentinels at his gate and discontinued the nightly gatherings. These men therefore became immensely enraged. Wherever a few of them collected, they would recount the faults and shortcomings of Sayd and even of Hadzrat Othman. Sayd and a considerable number of the Kufans petitioned Hadzrat Othman for their banishment. Under

the orders of the Caliph, Ashtar and 9 other persons were banished to Syria. Here Muaviya, the governor, received them with consideration, treated them kindly, and pointed out to them the impropriety of enmity with the Koreish to whom the Arabs owed a noble religion and a career of conquest. But they still proved irreconcilable, so they were sent back to Mesopotamia but in the way Abdur Rahman bin Khalid, the governor of Hems detained them, and dealt so severely with them that they were cowed down and became repentant. Still the calumnies against Hadzrat Othman and his governors went on and things came to such a pass that the Caliph called Muaviya, Abdullah Abi Sarh, Sayd bin Al-Aasi, Abdullah bin Aamer and Amr-bin-al-Aas for consultation as to the best means of checking the growing discontent. In order to divert the attention of the malcontents Ibn Aamer advised that they should be sent to holy war. Sayd counselled the execution of the ringleaders for the suppression of sedition. Muaviya requested the Caliph to clear Medina of the disaffected and authorise the governors to do the same thing in the provinces under their charge. Abdullah Abi Sarh thought it prudent to buy off the malcontents by means of money. After the council was over, the Caliph directed the governors to go to their

respective provinces and send the people to holy war.

At the time of leaving Kufa for Medina Sayd made Amru bin Harith his representative in Kufa and placed Qaqaa bin Amru in charge of the army. He also designated officers for the governorship of Azerbijan, Rai, Hamadan, Ispahan, Mosal, Bab, Holwan and other places. When the supporters of Sayd left Kufa for their respective jurisdiction, Yezid bin Qays, with a number of men who were followers of Ibn Saba held secret correspondence with him and left Kufa with the object of procuring the Caliph's resignation. Qaqaa stopped them, but as Yezid declared that he had no other object but to make complaints against Sayd he was let off. Yezid called the deportees from Hems. Ashtar came ahead to Kufa and on a Friday addressed the congregation saying "I have left the despot Sayd in Medina, counselling the reduction of your stipends and those of the women as well and calling the fields you have conquered the garden of the Koreish." He concluded by inviting them to join the force under Yezid bin Qays. On this a crowd of men joined Yezid in preventing the return of Sayd. These men encamped at Jarah. When Sayd came to the place on his way to Kufa, they made him return to Medina and desired him to inform the Caliph that they wanted Abu Musa to be their governor.

Ashtar further killed Sayd's slave who persisted in proceeding to Kufa. The good-natured Caliph with unusual forbearance, took no step for the punishment of the ring-leaders of this outrage, but sent Abu Musa to Kufa. When Abu Musa took over charge, he preached a sermon dilating upon the duty of the Moslems to obey Hadzrat Othman, their Caliph. The congregation seemed to assent to this proposition but the followers of Ibn Saba spread in the different parts of the empire and continued the agitation against Hadzrat Othman and his governors.

Ere long a body of the malcontents approached Hadzrat Aly and complained to him against the Caliph. At their request Hadzrat Aly visited the Caliph and said:—"The people bid me expostulate with thee, yet what can I say to thee—son-in-law as thou wast of the Prophet and his bosom friend that thou already knowest not as well as I? The way lieth plain and wide before thee; but thy eyes are blinded that thou canst not see it. If blood be once shed, it will not cease to flow until the day of judgment. Right will be blotted out and treason rage like the foaming waves of the sea. "For my own part," the Caliph replied, "I have done my best; and as for the men ye speak of, did not Omar himself appoint Mughira to Kufa, and if Ibn Aamer be my kinsman, is he any the worse

for that?" "No," rejoined Ali, "but Omar kept his ileutenants in order, and when they did wrong, he punished them; whereas thou treatest them softly because they are thy kinsmen." "As for Muaviya," continued the Caliph, "it was Omar who appointed him to Syria." "Yes," answered Hadzrat Aly, "but I swear that even Omar's slaves did not stand so much in awe of their master, as did Muaviya. But now he doth whatever he pleaseth and saith it is Othman. And thou knowing it all, leavest him alone?" This conversation over, Hadzrat Aly repaired to his home, while Hadzrat Othman proceeded to the mosque and addressing the assembly said, "My kindness has emboldened you. In the time of Omar you did not possess such boldness. It now behoves you to turn away from your ideas and to leave your affairs to your officials." This insipid speech fell flat upon the people.

Reports of sedition continued to reach Medina, hence a large body of citizens waited upon the Caliph and found him ill informed. On their advice, he sent a few able persons to the various seats of government, to ascertain the nature and extent of the seditious ideas. Muhammed bin Moslema proceeded to Kufa, Osama bin Zaid to Bussorah and Abdur Rahman bin Omar to Syria. These gentlemen returned from their tour and reported that they found

nothing serious. Ammar bin Yaser who went to Egypt was gained over by the disaffected. These persons did not allow him to return soon. About the same time, the Caliph sent two circular letters throughout the empire. In one of these, he requested the disaffected to come to Mecca on pilgrimage and to prove their complaints, if any, against the officials, so that he might render justice. On reading the letter people wept and invoked God's mercy on the Caliph. In the second letter he requested the officials to come prepared to answer the charges if any were preferred. At the appointed time Ibn Aamer, Ibn Abi Sarh, Muaviya and Sayd bin-al Aasi appeared in Mecca. The Caliph told these officials that it was a matter of regret that complaints against them reached him and he feared lest some of the charges might turn out true. They replied that they were not aware of any such complaints nor were they guilty of any delinquency. They further added that the Caliph's agents who had been commissioned to inquire into the matter had found nothing against them and that the Caliph should not pay any heed to the baseless complaints. A discussion followed in which there was a difference of opinion about the best means of stamping out sedition. Probably taking this hint, none preferred any complaint and the pilgrimage passed off quietly. When the Caliph

returned to Medina, he called Hadzrat Aly, Talha and Zobeir. After some conversation, he informed them that the fifty thousand dirhems given to Abdullah bin Khalid bin Asid and fifteen thousand dirhems paid to Merwan bin Hakam from the public treasury would be recovered from them. These gentlemen were satisfied with the assurance given and repaired to their homes. After their departure Muaviya advised the Caliph to leave for Syria with him before any attack was made which he would be unable to withstand. The aged, gentle and pious Caliph firmly refused to leave the place of the holy Prophet's burial. Muaviya then volunteered to send a strong body of soldiers for his protection, but the Caliph did not agree to this proposal also, as he did not like to oppress the people of Medina, among whom the soldiers would be quartered. Muaviya then foretold that the Caliph would be treacherously dealt with and he left for Syria.

The turbulent and disaffected persons planned to make a sudden attack upon the Caliph, just after the departure of the officials. Accidentally this plan failed hence they opened correspondence with each other and decided to assemble in Medina on a fixed date. In the month of Shaban of 35 A.H., one thousand rebels of Egypt under the leadership of Ghafaqi bin Harb started for Medina and an equal

number of rebels among whom were Zaid bin Safwan, Ashtar Nakhii, Zaid bin-an-Nazar and Abdullah bin-al-Asem, left Kufa for the same destination. The same number also left Bussorah under the leadership of Harqus bin Zohir. The rebels encamped at different places near Medina. They determined to make the Caliph resign, or to procure wholesale dismissal of the officials or to kill him if he did not agree to adopt either of the courses. Zaid bin-an-Nazar and Abdulla bin-al-Asem advised the rebels not to be in a hurry and volunteered to repair to Medina to ascertain the truth of the report that the Medinites armed themselves in self-defence. They entered into Medina and found the citizens prepared to defend themselves. They then visited Hadzrat Aly, Talha, Zobeir and the "mothers of the faithful" (*i.e.*, the wives of the holy Prophet) and told them that they came to perform the lesser pilgrimage and had some complaints against some officials. As the personages forbade them to make any complaints, the two rebels turned back to their accomplices to discuss what measures were to be adopted. It was decided to gain over either Hadzrat Aly, Talha or Zobeir. A few Egyptians approached their hero Hadzrat Aly stating that they were dissatisfied with Hadzrat Othman's rule and offered to swear allegiance to him. Hadzrat Aly indignantly rejected the

proposal and remarked that they were damned persons. The rebels of Bussorah and Kufa sounded their respective favourites Talha and Zobeir, but met with no better success.

When Hadzrat Othman came to learn of the intentions of the rebels, he proceeded to Hadzrat Aly and requested him anyhow to disperse the rebels. Hadzrat Aly replied, "I warned you before of the danger, but you never acted according to my advice; on the contrary, you allowed yourself to be guided by Merwan, Muaviya, Ibn Aamer, Ibn Abi Sarh and Sayd bin al Aasi. How and on what grounds, shall I now disperse the rebels?" Hadzrat Othman answered, "Henceforth I shall follow your advice and shall not lend my ears to others." Hadzrat Aly now approached the malcontents, appeased them with sweet words, gave them hopes of favour from the Caliph and introduced the leaders to the Caliph himself. It was represented to the Caliph that the letter which he had addressed to Abdullah Abi Sarh ordering him to remove the grievances of the oppressed and warning him about his conduct bore no fruit. It had rather irritated him and he had put some of the complainants to death and tortured others. The Caliph consented to the removal of Abdullah Abi Sarh and appointed Muhammad bin Abu Bakr in his place. Some concessions were likewise granted to the people

of Kufa and Bussorah, whereupon all the malcontents left for their home.[1]

After the departure of the rebels of Egypt Hadzrat Aly visited the Caliph and requested him to deliver a sermon explaining matters so that the malcontents from other towns might not come to Medina. Accordingly the Caliph stood on the pulpit and said, "I beg the pardon of God for what I have done and I turn away from these acts. Let your prominent men come to me and help me with their advice. I shall follow the truth with the docility of a slave, and by God, I shall keep you contented." A few Omaiyads, who were not present, when the sermon had been delivered, became dissatisfied with it and severely criticised it. Naila, the Caliph's wife rebuked the men for their unfavourable comment, but they did not pay any heed to her. At this time, a crowd of people who were pleased with the sermon of the Caliph, assembled at his gate, in order to strengthen the bonds of love. The Caliph unfortunately authorised Merwan to speak harshly to them. Merwan insulted them and even threatened them. When Hadzrat Aly heard of the incident he waited upon the Caliph and spoke to him about it. The Caliph became repentant and promised to follow his advice in future.

[1] This account is to be found in Rowzat us Safah but not in Ibn Khuldun.

Ere long the Egyptian rebels returned to encamp near Medina and called back the rebels of Kufa and Bussorah, who had not proceeded far on their homeward journey. They now found that the citizens of Medina had laid aside their arms and were not prepared to oppose them. Hadzrat Aly at the head of a small party set out to enquire the cause of their return. The rebels showed to him a letter which they had found with a slave who had been proceeding towards Egypt, on a camel which formed part of the tithes. The rebels, while on their way back to Egypt, saw the slave, and discovered the letter. It bore the seal of the slave's master who was no less a personage than the Caliph himself. It contained instructions to Ibn Abi Sarh, the governor of Egypt, for the punishment of the ringleaders. Abdur Rahman bin Adis and a few others were to be imprisoned, and scourged with a durrah (a wooden club) and their heads, and beards were to be shaved; a few were to be put to death.[1] Now the rebels with Hadzrat Aly and Muhammad bin Moslema went to the Caliph and showed him the letter. The Caliph admitted his seal but denied that he had any knowledge of the

[1] Some historians say that when Hadzrat Aly asked the Egyptians how the malcontents of Kufa and Bussorah returned, they could not give a satisfactory reply. From this fact it is argued that the malcontents were determined to return; the finding of the letter was an excuse. This version does not appear probable, though Sir W. Muir has adopted it.

letter. It turned out to be in the handwriting of Merwan bin Hakam, the adviser of the Caliph. The rebels demanded the resignation of Hadzrat Othman, on the allegation that he told a lie or showed such gross negligence in the matter of the letter that he could no longer be trusted with the onerous and responsible office of the Caliph. Hadzrat Othman declined to resign an office in which God had placed him but expressed his willingness to rectify the mistakes which he might have committed. Ibn Adis, a rebel, said that the Caliph made promises on previous occasions but broke them, so they were determined either to take the office of the Caliphate from him or to kill him. He also expressed the determination of the rebels to fight to death with the persons who may choose to protect the Caliph. Hadzrat Othman with noble courage replied, "You will not have to fight with any one. Had I decided to adopt that course, I would have assembled a large force from the different parts of the empire." After this threat the citizens of Medina confined themselves to their home and would not generally mix themselves up in the affair between the rebels and the Caliph.

The rebels of Egypt, Kufa and Bussorah now got access to the city. On the occasion of the first Friday prayer, after the arrival of the rebels, the Caliph delivered a sermon in which

he appealed to the citizens of Medina to stand on the side of law and order. To the rebels he said, "On account of the Prophet's words the people of Medina consider you damned, because you have risen against his Caliph. Wash out your misdeeds by repentance and by good deeds make atonement for the past." Muhammad bin Moslema rose to support the speech of the Caliph, but Hakim bin Jablah, a rebel from Bussorah made him sit down. Other attempts to support the Caliph were similarly frustrated. The rebels then in a body proceeded towards the pulpit. The Medinities dispersed them by throwing stones at them. The rebels also threw stones at the Caliph, who being hurt, fell down senseless. Saad bin Abi Waqqas, and a few others fought on behalf of the Medinites and carried the Caliph to his house. When the noble Caliph regained his consciousness he forbade the heroic but small band of his defenders to fight with the rebels. On receipt of the news Hadzrat Aly, Talha and Zobeir came to the Caliph to enquire about his health. The Omaiyads present there reproached Hadzrat Aly for all that had taken place and asserted that he had been at the bottom of the affair.[1] Hadzrat Aly

[1] It seems to me that the baseless accusation was the result of the meanness and jealousy of the Omaiyads and of the then perturbed state of their mind. The noble and magnanimous Aly, who had rejected the offer of the Caliphate on certain easy terms, who sent his son to

gave no reply. The advisers of the Caliph now requested him to ask Hadzrat Aly to disperse the rebels assuring them that the officials would be dismissed and new men would be appointed according to their desire. When Hadzrat Aly approached the rebels in this matter, they demanded that a time should be named, within which the existing officials would be removed. With the consent of Hadzrat Othman the rebels were informed that within three days, the necessary changes would be effected, but this was not done. The rebels therefore came to Medina to enforce the fulfilment of the promise. As Hadzrat Othman probably under the influence of Merwan and his relatives refused to make the changes, the rebels blockaded his house. Impressed by the determined attitude of the rebels, the Caliph wrote to Mu'aviya and Ibn Aamer to send soldiers for his protection. He also sent for Hadzrat Aly, Talha and Zobeir. These personages came accompanied by the citizens of Medina. At the request of the Caliph both the loyalists and the rebels sat down. The Caliph then reminded the assembly how after the death of Hadzrat Omar, they appealed to God to make them unanimous in selecting the best man as their Caliph and how he was elected. He next invited their attention to his

protect the Caliph and who remonstrated with the rebels for cutting off the supply of the Caliph's water could not be guilty of such a mean act.

antecedents and requested them to forgive him for the sake of his past deeds. In conclusion he remarked that the execution of any one except the renegade, the adulterer, and the murderer is unlawful. Under the circumstances, the rebels would be putting the sword on their own necks, if they killed their Caliph, who was not one of the three classes of persons whose murder is allowable. The rebels replied that the murder of a fourth class of persons, namely, those that like the Caliph were the cause of trouble, is allowable. Hadzrat Othman who was astounded with the reply, remained silent and the citizens of Mecca except Hasan, Muhammad bin Talha and Abdullah bin Zobeir, repaired to their homes. On the eighteenth day of the blockade it became known that troops from the different parts of the empire were coming to Medina. The rebels therefore increased the rigour of the blockade. They prevented all communication with the Caliph and stopped his supply of water and food. Subsequently they disallowed the Caliph from leading the public prayers, which duty was taken up by Ghafaqi bin Harith one of the ringleaders. The Caliph requested Hadzrat Aly, Talha, Zobeir and the "mothers of the faithful" to send him some water if they could. On receipt of the piteous appeal Hadzrat Aly went to the rebels, upbraided them for their heartless conduct and

requested them not to cut off the Caliph's supply of water, as neither the Greeks nor the Persians starved their prisoners, but his words fell on unheeding ears so he had to return home disappointed. Hadzrat Umm Habibah, a wife of the Prophet and a sister of Muaviya, rode on a mule, to see the Caliph, with some provisions. The rebels refused to let her proceed, but she persisted in going. The rebels struck the mule on the mouth and cut the reins. The mule bolted and she narrowly escaped a fall. The Medinites caught the animal and led Hadzrat Umm Habibah to her house. Hadzrat Aly however succeeded in surreptitiously sending water to the Caliph for some time.

Shortly after this incident, the Caliph one day, called the rebels, and addressing them from the terrace of his house, he said, "you certainly know there was only one well by the name of Ruma in Medina. I purchased it with my own money and instead of making it my private property, I dedicated it for the use of the public, for their convenience. I am entitled to the use of it, as well as any other member of the community so why do you prevent me from its benefit. You are further aware there was not sufficient accommodation in the great cathedral mosque. I purchased lands out of my private purse and extended it, so why do you not allow

me to offer prayers therein. You also know that the holy prophet spoke well of me on different occasions." The speech had some effect in softening the minds of the rebels, but Ashtar the inveterate enemy of the Caliph again excited the crowd against him.

Now the time of the annual pilgrimage was approaching. The Caliph appointed Ibn Abbas to lead the pilgrims. Ibn Abbas said it was more congenial to him to fight with the rebels than guide the pilgrims. In spite of his wishes, Ibn Abbas was obliged to take the pilgrims to Mecca at the request of the Caliph. When the rebels saw that the pilgrims were following the lead of Ibn Abbas, they determined to murder the Caliph to save themselves from the consequences of a rebellion. The rebels in a body furiously attacked the gate. Hadzrat Hasan, Ibn Zubeir, Muhammad bin Talha, Merwan, Sayd-bin-al-Aasi and the children of the companions, who were present there repulsed the rebels. The Caliph called in the heroic defenders and entreated them not to fight. In the meantime the rebels set fire to the gate, which burnt down. Hadzrat Othman now sat down to read the divine Koran. In the midst of his reading, he once turned towards his adherents and informed them that he had seen in a dream the holy Prophet who had predicted his death. He therefore requested his friends not to fight and ordered Hadzrat

Hasan to go to his father. In spite of the instructions Hadzrat Hasan, Merwan and Sayd bin-al-Aasi and a few others fought with the rebels. Merwan who bravely fought in the front rank was badly wounded and was carried by his servants. The rebels took him to be dead, but his injuries were really not fatal. Sayd bin-al-Aasi also received a severe injury and was disabled. Some of the rebels got up on the roof of a house to the back of the Caliph's premises and entered into his apartments, without the knowledge of the brave defenders, who were at the gate. Three of the rebels went to the Caliph one by one and demanded his resignation, which Hadzrat Othman firmly refused. Now Muhammad bin Abu Bakr approached Hadzrat Othman and abused him by catching hold of his beard. Hadzrat Othman said, "Your father would have respected my old age and would not have behaved with me like you." Muhammad felt ashamed and went away. A group of ruffians now closed upon Hadzrat Othman and attacked him ruthlessly. Ghafaqi struck the first blow. His sacred blood fell on the following verse of the Koran—"God shall support thee against them, for He is the Hearer, the Wise." Saudan bin Haadan struck the Caliph with a sword. Naila the Caliph's wife warded off the blow with her hand but her fingers were cut off in

this noble act. Accursed Kinana's blow proved fatal and terminated the life of the Caliph on Friday, the 18th Zulhajj, 35 A. H. or June 656 A. D. The slaves of the Caliph now attacked the rebels with the result that on both sides a few casualties took place. Unabashed by the diabolical deed, the fiends began to plunder the properties of the unfortunate but heroic Caliph and did not spare even the clothes and ornaments of the ladies. The sacred remains of the unlucky Caliph lay unburied for three days. At last a few citizens of Medina approached Hadzrat Aly who gave permission for the burial of the holy corpse. In spite of the opposition of some of the rebels, the corpse was interred at night outside the Jinnatul-Baqi with the gory clothes which the Caliph wore at the time of his martyrdom.

The conclusion.

Such was the tragic end of one of the most generous, pious, pure and heroic souls of early Islam. In spite of his opulence, he led a simple life but with a magnificent liberality, he spent his money in charity. He purchased the well named Ruma, and assigned it for the benefit of the public, subscribed liberally for the force which eventually took part in the battle of Tabuk; distributed to the needy a large quantity of grain in a period of famine, at his own expense, acquired lands and extended the

apostolic mosques of Medina and Mecca, and performed the duties of the Caliphate without any remuneration. To his recension of the Koran, we owe the present correct edition of the book. On account of a verse in the holy Koran, he considered it a sacred duty to help his relatives. Hence he put them in important public offices and gave them large sums of money out of the public treasury. Taking advantage of his kind and mild nature, his unworthy relatives, several of whom were governors of Provinces, committed acts of high-handedness and injustice which caused discontent. Being faced by strong and even armed opposition, he would at times consent to their dismissal, though not convinced of the necessity of the step. As soon as such opposition ceased, he would withdraw his consent. He was however willing to punish specific complaints though he declined to dismiss them wholesale or to deliver them to blind fury. With equal magnanimity he declined to employ force against the malcontents and cause unnecessary bloodshed among Moslems, but with awful coolness, uncommon courage, and exemplary self-sacrifice he laid down his own life to allay the fury of the rebels. But for his mildness which "leaned to virtue's side," he would have been an ideal ruler of men. As a private individual his character was simply adorable.

HADZRAT ALY MURTADZA

CHAPTER XXX

A GENERAL SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF HADZRAT ALY

Hadzrat Aly's birth and early life.

When Fatima, daughter of Asad, a son of Hashim went to visit the temple of Kaaba, in the 30th year of the Elephant or 599 A. D., she got pains of labour there and gave birth to a child, who in after life became the famous Moslem hero, Hadzrat Aly. The child had thus the unique distinction of being born in the holy shrine. The child's father, Abd Manaf, better known as Abu Talib, was a son of Abdul Muttalib bin Hashim. He was therefore a Hashimite on the side of his both parents. This was again a rare distinction. He was a first cousin of the holy Prophet whose father Abdullah was a brother of Abu Talib. Some historians say that during his father's absence from home his mother named him Asad, *i.e.*, lion. When the father came back he named the child Aly. As Hadzrat Aly showed uncommon bravery in the battles with the enemies of Islam he was

surnamed Haidar, which is another word for "lion." He was also called Abul Hasan after the name of his eldest son, Hasan. Quarrelling with his wife Fatima on a certain occasion, he went to the mosque at Medina and laid himself down on the bare ground. When the holy Prophet reached the mosque, he found him sleeping on the bare floor covered with dust. The apostle brushed the dust from his person and half humorously and half affectionately called him "Abu Torab" that is "father of dust." This nickname stuck to him and he used to be pleased if addressed by that name on account of its associations. He received the title of Murtaza or the Choicest. In a year of famine, when Hadzrat Aly was a mere boy, his father Abu Talib, who, in spite of his respectability and high social position, was a man of limited means, found it difficult to maintain his large family. At this juncture, the holy Prophet, perhaps to repay the debt which he himself owed to Abu Talib, who brought him up with parental care and affection, volunteered to take charge of Hadzrat Aly and induced his uncle Hadzrat Abbas, the richest person among the Hashimites, to take charge of another child named Jaafar. The upshot of this proposal was that Hadzrat Aly found a congenial home in the house of the holy Prophet who brought him up with affection.

His conversion.

The loving nature of the holy Prophet and his uprightness and truthfulness made such a strong impression on the soft mind of Aly, that he at once believed in the apostolic mission which devolved on the Prophet in the fortieth year of his life. He was thus one of the early converts to Islam.[1] Though he was at the time a mere boy of about ten years, he used to go out stealthily to join the holy Prophet in his prayers in lonely places and caves. One day Abu Talib, who got scent of the matter, suddenly appeared on the scene of their prayers and asked the holy Prophet what religion he had adopted. The apostle replied that his religion was the religion of God, of angels and of his forefather Abraham and requested his uncle to profess the faith and help him in its propagation. Abu Talib could not see his way to give up the religion of his forefathers, but promised to protect his nephew from any harm as long as he lived. He further permitted Hadzrat Aly to adhere to the religion of his choice remarking that the Prophet would lead him to paths of truth only.

At first the holy Prophet used to teach his religion secretly but in the third or fourth year

[1] Some historians say that Hadzrat Aly was the first convert but a good many assert that Hadzrat Khadija was the first convert, then came Hadzrat Aly, Zaid, the liberated slave, and Hadzrat Abu Bakr. This order appears to be correct.

of his ministry, he on receipt of divine command,[1] to preach his religion to his nearest relatives, invited about 40 of his kinsmen to a dinner. In this assembly, he spoke of the divine command and inquired who among them would co-operate with him in that task and become his brother, his legatee and his representative. No response came from any one. This want of sympathy was too much for the boy Aly to bear. He got up on his legs and said he would put his shoulders to the task, though he was the juniormost person in that assembly. His reply excited laughter among the guests but the holy Prophet affectionately patted him for his courage and declared him to be his brother, his legatee and his representative.

In the thirteenth year of the ministry, the holy Prophet in order to save his followers from persecutions decided to migrate to Yathreb (Medina) where a considerable body of men[2] promised to protect him and his companions at any cost. He therefore instructed his

[1] The command is contained in the following verse of the sacred Koran—"And put specially your nearest relatives in fear of the torments of God." Chap. 19, Sura shoza, verse 214.

[2] Six persons of Yathreb professed Islam in the 11th year of the ministry and 12 persons more were converted in the 12th year. In the 13th year, 73 men and 2 women came to Mecca at the time of the Pilgrimage, professed Islam and promised to protect the holy Prophet and his companions.

companions to leave for Yathreb in small groups. The emigration of the Moslems excited the jealousy and fear of the Koreish, who thought that the Moslems on gaining sufficient strength might retaliate for all the wrongs they had suffered. For this reason they held a meeting in their council hall, and decided to assassinate the holy Prophet. The bloody deed was to be performed jointly by members of several families, so that the Hashimites would have to count against all the families in their attempt to take revenge for the contemplated murder. On the spread of darkness of night the Koreish surrounded the house of the Prophet with the object of attacking him when he would fall asleep. Perceiving the design of the unbelievers, the divine Apostle gave his own bed and his own mantle to Hadzrat Aly and desired him to lie thereon covering himself with the garment. He then assured Hadzrat Aly of his safety and escaped secretly to the house of Hadzrat Abu Bakr. Brave and chivalrous as Aly was, he did not hesitate to risk his own life for the safety of the Prophet. He slept on the bed without the least anxiety. It is said that the angel Gabriel warned the Prophet of the plot. The would-be assassins were sadly disappointed when they discovered that the Apostle had disappeared and Aly was on his bed. Their blood was up against Aly, whom they treated

very roughly but Hadzrat Aly stuck to his post. He remained in Mecca for 3 days to return the things deposited with the holy Prophet for safe custody. Discharging this duty, he set out for Medina on foot. For fear of the Koreish he hid himself in day time and travelled only at night. At last he joined the holy Prophet at Qoba, which was a village about two miles from Medina.

His part in the battle of Badr.

In the famous battle of Badr in 2 A.H., Otba, his brother Shiba and his son Walid came out to challenge three Moslems to a single combat. At first the holy Prophet selected three youthful Auxiliaries to meet the champions of the Koreish, but the latter declined to fight with the men as they were not of their own tribe. In consequence of the refusal Hadzrat Aly closed in with Walid, Hamza tried his strength with Otba and Obaida bin Harith measured his sword with Shiba. Hadzrat Aly and Hamza killed their adversaries in no time; but Obaida bin Harith being an old man found it difficult to overpower Shiba. In the struggle both of them were wounded. Hadzrat Aly and Hamza then came to the rescue of Obaida and despatched Shiba. A general engagement now took place. At times alone and at times with the help of others, Hadzrat Aly accounted for good many infidels by putting

them to the sword. This was perhaps the first battle in which Hadzrat Aly took part.

Battle of Ohod.

In the battle of Ohod (3 A. H.) Talha bin Abdul Uzza, the standard-bearer of the idolaters, proudly advanced to the field and challenged any Moslem to a single combat. Hadzrat Aly stepped forward and with one stroke of his sword brought Talha bin Abdul Uzza to the ground. In this battle Hadzrat Aly with a few other Moslem warriors fought with marvellous courage and boldness, like the heroes of the Illiad, carrying death and destruction wherever they went. Later on when Musa bin Amir, the standard bearer of the Refugees fell in the battle, Hadzrat Aly had the honour of carrying the same. He stuck to his post and continued to fight bravely, though a rumour of the death of the holy Prophet was going on its round. Subsequently he fought his way to the holy Prophet, on learning of his safety.

His marriage with Hadzrat Fatima.

In 2 or 3 A.H. Hadzrat Aly was married to Hadzrat Fatima. She was the youngest and dearest daughter of the holy Prophet by his first and most exalted wife Hadzrat Khadija. Hadzrat Abu Pakr Siddiq and Hadzrat Omar Faruq by turn solicited her hands, but the Apostle did not accede to the request on the ground of her immaturity.

When Hadzrat Aly with much diffidence became a suitor, the holy Prophet readily gave his assent. At the time Hadzrat Aly had only a horse and an armour but no money. At the instance of the Prophet, Hadzrat Aly sold his armour for 480 dirhems and handed over the money to him for the expenses of the marriage. The Apostle gave her two silver bazubands (an ornament for the arm), a cup, two waterpots, a leather bag, one millstone, one pan (for baking bread), one sheet, one big and four small pillows, two quilts. Her marriage dower was fixed at 400 silver dirhems, that is, 150 tolas of silver to be paid by Hadzrat Aly.

His post in the battle of the Trench.

In the "Battle of the Trench" in 5 A.H. when Ikrama bin Abu Jahl and a few others on their horses cleared the ditch round Medina at a weak point, Hadzrat Aly with a few picked men got behind them and cut their retreat. Amr bin Abd Wad, a famous but aged warrior, who alone was match for 1,000 men, challenged Hadzrat Aly to a single combat and dismounting from his horse, mutilated it, in token of a resolve to conquer or to die. Hadzrat Aly who was not the man to decline a challenge closed in with his adversary. For a few minutes, the combatants were shrouded in a cloud of dust but the cry of "great is the Lord" from the lips of Hadzrat Aly announced the death of

Amr. The incident was recorded by Hadzrat Aly himself in the following verses :—

He on account of his deficient intelligence solicited his idol's help,

And I, owing to right thinking asked the Lord of Muhammed for help.

Therefore I throwing him like an unhewn block,

On the ground, turned back from him.

I shut my eyes from his apparels,

But if I were thrown he would have taken my clothes.

O you wretched being, do not think that God
Will disgrace his religion and his Apostle.

His valour in the campaign against Khayber.

In 7 A.H., in the campaign against Khayber, the valour of Hadzrat Aly appeared to its best advantage. The impregnable fort of Qamus stood against all efforts of reduction. After repeated attacks the holy Prophet, one day, gave the standard to Hadzrat Abu Bakr for its capture, but he returned unsuccessful. On the next day, the standard was given to Hadzrat Omar but with no better result. The Apostle of God then said, "On the next morning I will give the standard to one who will surely reduce the fort. The man loves God and his Prophet and is loved by them." The companions of the holy Prophet passed a sleepless night in attempting to guess who would be the fortunate

recipient of the standard in the dawning morn. The holy Prophet sent for Hadzrat Aly who had an eyeache, spat on his eyes, which ceased to give any more trouble, and then handed over the standard to him. When Hadzrat Aly approached the famous fort, Marhab, a Jewish hero, came out with extraordinary valour and entered into a duel with him. Hadzrat Aly dealt such a violent stroke that his opponent's helmet and head were cut through. Being taken aback by the sudden fall of their greatest hero, the Jews ran within the walls of the fort and shut the gate. Hadzrat Aly with his followers pursued the Jews. A fierce engagement took place near the fort. The blow of a Jew caused Hadzrat Aly's shield to fall down. He caught hold of the gate of the fort and pulled it with such tremendous force that it got detached and came to his hand. It served him as his shield till the end of the battle. Subsequently Abu Rafi, a servant of the holy Prophet and seven others out of curiosity tried to turn it but failed.[1]

Conquest of Mecca.

At the conquest of Mecca in 8 A.H., the holy Prophet made over the standard to Hadzrat Aly after taking it from Saad bin Abada, because the

[1] Jabir bin Abdullah narrates that Hadzrat Aly carried the gate upon his back, and that the Moslems got upon it and took the fort. They dragged the gate afterwards, but it took forty men to lift it. This account seems to be an exaggeration.

latter gave vent to feelings of animosity. On this occasion the Apostle himself demolished the images in the holy shrine of Kaaba. A few images on the walls being beyond his reach, he requested Hadzrat Aly to mount on his shoulders and destroy them.

Hadzrat Ali carried out the orders, but he narrated afterwards that when he was on the shoulders of the divine Apostle, he felt that he could have touched the sky.[1]

His part in the battle of Hunayn.

In the battle of Hunayn when the Moslem army was running back in a panic, Hadzrat Aly with seven other persons stood by the holy Prophet. Ibn Hisham narrates that on this occasion Hadzrat Aly killed a brave warrior of the Hawazin tribe and 40 other persons. This man riding on a camel and bearing a black flag put to the sword every Moslem who came within his reach. He also chased the runaways, whenever he got an opportunity. Hadzrat Aly with one stroke of his sword brought down his camel and with another stroke put an end to his life.

Expedition against the Beni Tay.

About the beginning of the ninth Hegira, Hadzrat Aly was sent out with a detachment of 200 horse to destroy a temple belonging to the Beni Tay. He thoroughly accomplished

[1] The incident of Hadzrat Aly's mounting on the shoulders of the Prophet is mentioned by Imam Nasayi.

the task assigned to him and returned with a good many prisoners and plunder. Among the prisoners was a daughter of Hatim Tay a Christian Bedouin famous for his generosity. In consideration of her father's virtues, the Prophet set her at liberty.

Expedition against Tabuk in 9 A. H.

When setting out for the expedition against Tabuk in 9 A. H., the Prophet left Hadzrat Aly [1] at Medina to look after his household affairs. Some of the disaffected persons maliciously told Hadzrat Aly that he was left behind as an unnecessary burden. On account of the taunt he armed himself, and proceeded to the holy Prophet at Jorf, and reported to him what the disaffected persons had said. The Apostle assured him of the baseless character of the report and said "you are to me what Harun was to Moses [2] with this difference, that you shall not be a prophet, because I am the last of all prophets."

Commissioned to read out Sura Barat.

In the ninth year of the Hegira Hadzrat Abu Bakr was commissioned to lead the pilgrims to Mecca and to recite 40 verses of the Sura

[1] On this occasion the Prophet really appointed Muhammed bin Muslama to be his representative at Medina, though there are some traditions to the effect that Hadzrat Aly was given that dignity.

[2] Harun was brother of Moses. When the latter proceeded to Mount Tur he appointed Harun his representative. Harun afterwards became a prophet.

styled Barat on the great day of the sacrifice. In modification of the order, Hadzrat Aly was deputed to proclaim the Sura, as it was considered more appropriate that a member of the family of the Prophet should perform the task. He read out the verses at the place of casting stones near Mina, and delivered a short speech giving the following summary of them.

"I have been commanded to declare unto you that no unbeliever shall enter paradise. No idolater after this year shall perform the pilgrimage, and no one shall make the circuit of the holy house naked. Whosever hath a treaty with the Prophet, it shall be respected till its termination. Four months are permitted to every tribe to return to their territories in security. After that the obligation of the Prophet ceaseth."

The Prophet included Hadzrat Aly among the members of his family.

In a challenge to curses[1] held forth to some Christians of Najran in 10 A. H., the holy Prophet included Hadzrat Aly and his wife and two sons among his own family. No other individual except Hadzrat Aly and his wife and children had the honour

[1] In those days two parties in order to determine the truth of a claim used to bring out their families to the open and to pray to God to visit their families with calamities if they were not in the right. A person, having no strong conviction of the truth of his own cause would not naturally take part in such a proceeding.

of being a member of the family of the Apostle of God.

In this year Khalid bin Walid was sent to Yemen to preach Islam. He remained there for 6 months but failed to secure a single convert. He was therefore recalled and Hadzrat Aly was sent in his place. The latter invited the Beni Hamdan to a large assembly, painted before them in vivid colour the horrible punishments of God, which the idolaters and the sinners had in store for them and read out the letter of the holy Prophet. They readily agreed to profess Islam.[1]

The Prophet's sayings at Ghadir Khum.

When returning to Medina, after the Farewell Pilgrimage in 10 A. H. the Prophet and his party encamped by the side of a large pool known as Ghadir Khum. Here he cleared the character of Hadzrat Aly against baseless accusations levelled at him in connection with

[1] This story is from Ibn Khuldun. In some accounts, it is narrated that Hadzrat Aly was sent out with 300 horses to reduce to submission the Beni Nakha and some other tribes of Yemen, who still held out. His horses scoured the surrounding country and returned with spoils, consisting of women, camels and flock. Driven to despair the people attacked Hadzrat Aly with stones and arrows, but his men defeated them. The chiefs thereafter paid homage and promised to profess Islam. From here Hadzrat Aly joined the holy Prophet in Mecca, at the time of the "Farewell Pilgrimage." A few historians say that Hadzrat Aly was twice sent to Yemen. In that case the versions given in the text and in this note might be reconciled as referring to two different occasions.

his conduct in Yemen.[1] He caught hold of Hadzrat Aly's hand and said "O God! Aly is friend of him whose friend I am. O God! love him who loves Aly and envy him who envies Aly." There could be no better blessing and praise higher than this.

Hadzrat Aly swore allegiance to Hadzrat Abu Bakr six months after the election.

When the holy Prophet departed from this world, on 12th Rabi I of 11th Hegira, that is, 632 A.D., Hadzrat Aly with the help of Hadzrat Abbas and his two sons and Osama bin Zaid and Shaqran, a slave of the Prophet, washed and clothed the dead body preparatory to burial. In the meanwhile some Ansars assembled in the Council Hall of the Beni Saida with a view to elect Saad bin Abada (chief of the Bani Khazraj) as Caliph. Hearing of this affair, Hadzrat Abu Bakr with Omar repaired to the spot with all haste. After some discussions, Hadzrat Abu Bakr was elected Caliph. In order to avoid a split among the Moslems, Hadzrat Aly was called to a meeting on the second day of the election and was requested to pay homage to the Caliph. He declined to accede to the request on the ground that he being the nearest relative of the Prophet was

[1] Hadzrat Aly took a handsome captive girl out of the royal fifth. This action was adversely criticised by some persons. When the Prophet heard of the accusation, he said more was due to Aly out of the royal share.

entitled to the office. Hadzrat Omar, Abu Obaida bin Jarrah and Bashir bin Saad replied to the objection of Hadzrat Aly who refuted them. At last Hadzrat Abu Bakr said that if Hadzrat Aly chose to swear allegiance, he would do what was expected of him, but if he thought fit to act otherwise, he might depart without any fear of molestation. Hadzrat Aly then left the meeting without paying homage but shortly after the death of his wife Hadzrat Fatima he accepted the Caliphate of Hadzrat Abu Bakr.[1] But neither during this Caliphate nor that of Omar and Othman, Hadzrat Aly took any active part in the wars of the empire or its administration, but his profound learning and his wise counsels were always at their disposal.

Wisdom and learning of Hadzrat Aly.

Hadzrat Aly was the most learned and eloquent man among his compatriots. He collected the holy Koran in chronological order and read it under the tuition of the divine Apostle. Abul Aswad-ad-Duali, Abu Abdur Rahman-as-Sulami and Abdur Rahman-Abi Layla learnt the holy book from him. With

[1] This account is given from Rowazatus Safah. Bokhari and Moslim give a similar story. In some accounts, it is said that he swore his allegiance on the second day of the election when he was called to a special meeting. It is further stated that Hadzrat Omar threatened to set fire to the house of Hadzrat Fatima if Hadzrat Aly dissented from the opinion of the majority. These versions do not appear to be true.

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reference to each verse of the Koran, he knew whether it was delivered at night or in the day, in the plain or on the hills. His knowledge of the Koran, the traditions and Muhammadan law was so perfect that Hadzrat Omar used to obtain his opinion whenever he was confronted with any difficult question. Once a woman was brought to Hadzrat Omar, who gave birth to a child only six months after her marriage. Hadzrat Omar ordered her to be stoned to death, which is the punishment for adultery. When Hadzrat Aly heard of the decision, he quoted the verse of the Koran to the effect that the period from pregnancy to the weaning of a child is two years and six months. He also cited the verse of the holy book in which a woman was directed to give milk to her child for two years. From these two verses, he deduced by a simple subtraction that the shortest period of gesticulation was six months, so the woman could not be punished for adultery. Hadzrat Omar accepted the decision and exonerated the woman. For intelligent decisions like these, Hadzrat Omar used to say, "Omar would be ruined if Hadzrat Aly were not present; in all difficult matters, Omar seeks the help of God, when Hadzrat Aly is not present." His sermons were full of philosophy and exhibited rare command of the Arabic language. His powers of expression can be gauged from the anecdote quoted

below. Once ten learned persons sought his permission to question him, and asked for separate answers. They asked whether knowledge is better than wealth. He gave the following ten different answers:—

(1) Knowledge is better than wealth, because the former is a legacy bequeathed by the prophets and the latter is a heritage from the Pharaoh.

(2) Knowledge is better because you guard wealth, while knowledge guards you.

(3) Knowledge is better because the wealthy have many enemies, but the learned have many friends.

(4) Knowledge is better because it increases with distribution but wealth decreases.

(5) Knowledge is better because a wealthy person sometimes becomes miser, while a learned man is always generous.

(6) Knowledge is better because unlike wealth it cannot be stolen.

(7) Knowledge is better, because in the day of judgment, an account will be taken of wealth but not of knowledge.

(8) Knowledge is better because it does not deteriorate on account of time, while wealth does.

(9) Knowledge is better because the mind is illuminated by it, while wealth tarnishes it.

(10) Knowledge is better, because the holy Prophet, on account of his perfect knowledge

said "we worship thee as we are your servants," while Pharaoh and others claimed divinity on account of wealth.

He was the father of Arabic grammar.

Hadzrat Aly was the father of Arabic grammar. He created this branch of knowledge and taught it to Abul Aswad Duali. One day Abul Aswad visited Hadzrat Aly and seeing him in deep contemplation, inquired what was the matter. Hadzrat Aly replied that he had heard a wrong pronunciation of the vowels in the city and was thinking of composing a work on the principles of the Arabic language, that is, on Arabic grammar. Abul Aswad encouraged him in his undertaking. A few days afterwards he gave to Abul Aswad a writing. It ran thus "In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. Speech consists entirely of nouns, verbs and participles. A noun is that which denotes the thing named, a verb is that which denotes the action named, and a participle is that which expresses a signification being neither a noun nor a verb." He further said "objects are of three kinds:—expressed, understood, and what is neither expressed nor understood and verily the learned vied with each other in the definition of what is neither expressed nor understood." In conclusion he asked Abul Aswad to add what might occur to him. Abul Aswad collected some parts of speech and

showed them to Hadzrat Aly who corrected the list. Such was the origin of Arabic grammar, which is one of the most perfect and elaborate grammars of the present day.[1]

He was one of the most intelligent persons of his time.

He was famous for his intelligent, just and correct decisions of even the most difficult cases presented to him. The holy Prophet once remarked that Aly was the best judge among the companions. On another occasion he said, "I am city of wisdom and Aly is its gate." It is said that when Hadzrat Aly was sent to Yemen, he said "O Apostle of God, dost thou send me a youth, to judge between them, while I know not the office of a judge." The Prophet struck his breast and prayed to God to direct him aright. Since then he never erred or hesitated in deciding disputes between parties.[2] One example of his intelligent decisions is narrated below. Two travellers were on their journey with 5 and 3 loaves of bread respectively. As they were about to eat them, a third person came and joined them. The three persons ate them in equal portion. At the time of departing, the stranger gave 8 dirhems. The traveller with 5 loanes of bread took 5 dirhems and gave 3 dirhems to the other traveller. The latter would not take less

[1] This account has been taken from Jalaluddin-as-Sunyuti's Lives of the Caliphs.

[2] This story is to be found in Jalaluddin's "History of the Caliphs."

than four dirhems, that is, half of the amount received. The matter was taken before Hadzrat Aly for decision. When he heard the story he asked the traveller with 3 loaves of bread to accept what was given to him, but he stood upon his rights and would not yield. Hadzrat Aly then said that in that case the man would get only one dirhem and the other man (*i.e.*, who had 5 loaves of bread) would get 7 dirhems. In his explanation he said "Divide each bread into 3 equal pieces; there will be 24 equal pieces out of the 8 loaves of bread. Each of the 3 persons ate 8 such pieces. The man with 3 loaves of bread had only 9 pieces out of which he ate 8 pieces leaving a balance of one piece but the man with 5 loaves of bread had 15 pieces out of which he ate 8 leaving 7 pieces. The stranger ate 8 pieces and paid 8 dirhems, that is, one dirhem for each piece. The man with 3 loaves of bread should therefore get only one dirhem for his surplus of one piece and the other man should get 7 dirhems for his balance of 7 pieces." "The man with 3 loaves of bread, who would not accept 3 dirhems, stood dumb-founded, when he heard the reasonings.[1]

His sayings.

The numerous sayings of Hadzrat Aly, some of which are given below, illustrate his intelligence, ready wit and philosophy.

[1] This story is to be found in Jalaluddin-as-Suyuli's "History of the Caliphs."

(1) O ye hearers of the Koran, act ye according to it, for he is a wise man who hath understood and acts according as he hath understood and whose knowledge hath accorded with his works, and it shall come to pass that there shall be sects carrying knowledge that goeth not beyond their collar bones, whose disposition is at variance with their exterior show and whose works are opposed to their understanding, sitting in a circle contending for superiority with one another, until a man will be wrath with his neighbour that he should sit with another than himself and leave him,—such as these, their works in these assemblies shall not ascend to God.

(2) Wisdom is the richest treasure, and folly the greatest poverty, and the most hateful of what is odious is pride, and the noblest excellence, a good disposition.

Beware thee of the companionship of a fool, for he will desire to profit by thee and do thee harm, and beware of the friendship of a liar, for he will bring nigh unto thee what is far off and make distant from thee what is near at hand—and beware thee of the friendship of a miser, for he will withhold from thee what thee are most in need of and beware thee of the friendship of a libertine for he will sell thee for a trifle.

(3) A Jew asked Hadzrat Aly "When did our God exist?" He flushed with anger and

said, "Creation was not when He was; He was while yet there was no being; He existed without a cause—He was, having no beginning and no end—all limits fall short of him, for He is the end of all ends." Hearing the answer, the Jew embraced Islam.

(4) He is near of kin whose kinship is of affection though his relationship be distant, and he is remote whom enmity hath rendered distant though his kinship be close, for there is nothing nearer to the body than the hand, but when the hand is corrupted it is cut off and when cut off it is cauterised.

(5) Take ye five maxims from me—(*a*) Let none of ye fear anything but his sin, (*b*) and hope for nothing but his Lord, (*c*) he who knoweth not, let him not be ashamed to learn, (*d*) he who knoweth, let him not be ashamed when he is asked concerning what he knoweth not, to say "God knows best" (that is, I do not know), (*e*) patience is to faith what the head is to the body, when patience departeth faith departeth and when the head goeth the body goeth.

Learned as Hadzrat Aly was in the Koran, traditions, Muhammadan law, literature and rhetoric, he did not neglect the fine arts. He was a poet of high order. Two specimens of his poetry are given below:—

(*a*) When the heart contains despair
And the spacious breast is stifled by what is within it

And cares make their abode and repose
And sorrows anchor in their habitations
And no way is seen for dispelling of distress
And the stratagem of the cunning availeth not,
There shall come to thee in thy despair a helper
Who is nigh and whom the answer of prayer shall bring;
For all sorrows when they have reached their term
There is linked to them an approaching joy.

(b) Disclose not thy secret but to thyself,
For every confidant, hath a confidant,
For verily I have seen erring men
Who do not aspire to a high sense of honour.[1]

His private life.

Hadzrat Aly had about 10 wives. Hadzrat Fatima, daughter of the Apostle by Hadzrat Khadija was his first wife. He did not marry any other wife while she was alive. He had by her 3 sons, namely, Hadzrat Hasan, Hussain and Mohsen and two daughters known as Zainab and Kulthum.

When Hadzrat Aly came to Medina he used to live by his own labour. It is said that on one occasion, he was roving about in Medina in search of work, as he had nothing to eat. He saw a woman who wanted some one to draw water for her. He undertook to do the work for the small wage of one date for each bucket of water. When he drew 16 buckets of water,

[1] The poems are to be found in Jalaluddin-as-Suyuti's "History of the Caliphs."

his holy hands became injured. He showed his hands to the woman who gave him 16 dates. He took them to the holy Prophet, related to him the whole story, and ate them with him. In the absence of any servant or maid servant, he used to draw water and perform all out-door works, while his mother and wife would do the rest. Even during his own caliphate he preserved his simplicity of habits. In this period he was once obliged to offer his sword for sale in order to raise money for a pair of trousers. Some one generously lent him the money, to stop the sale.[1]

His regard for judicial decisions.

He held himself amenable to judicial decisions like ordinary men. In the battle of Siffin, he lost an armour. It was found with a Jew in Kufa and he claimed it, but the Jew asserted that it belonged to him. He took the Jew to Qazi Sharih and reported that the armour was his and he had never sold it nor given it to the Jew. The Jew asserted that it belonged to him and had been in his possession. When the Qazi asked the Caliph for evidence, he cited his son Hasan and one of his slaves as witnesses. The Qazi rejected the evidence on the ground that the statement of a son in favour of his father and that of a slave in favour of his master were not admissible, and

[1] These incidents are to be found in Azalatul Khofa.

gave judgment against him. The Caliph loyally accepted the decision. Being impressed with this magnanimous conduct, the Jew professed Islam and declared that the armour really belonged to the Caliph.[1]

His method of distribution of the public money and his scrupulous guardianship of it.

He used to distribute the public revenue equally among the Musalmans and did away with the principles of priority in faith, proximity in kinship to the Prophet and ability. Generally he did not keep anything in the public treasury but forthwith distributed the money and other moveables including the smallest things. It is said that on a certain occasion, a loaf of bread formed part of the revenue received from Ispahan. He divided it into several pieces and distributed them. Once his brother Aqil came to him and asked for some money from the public treasury. He asked him to wait till the distribution of money among the Musalmans when he would get his due share. Aqil being dissatisfied repeated his request. Hadzrat Aly, replied that it would be better for Aqil to steal from the market-place instead of asking him to steal from the public treasury. Feeling himself aggrieved Aqil went over to Muaviya, who was in the habit of gaining over the partisans of Hadzrat Aly by the gift of gold.

[1] This story is given from the "History of the Caliphs," by Jalaluddin.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CALIPHATE OF HADZRAT ALY

Hadzrat Aly's election to the Caliphate.

For five days after the murder of Hadzrat Othman, Ghafaqi bin Harb led the public prayers in Medina and was the recognised leader of the rebels. The citizens were panick-stricken at the unexpected turn of events, because they never dreamt that the gentle and kind-hearted Caliph would be executed. The keen-sighted among the rebels foresaw great danger to the community if they left the city before appointing a Caliph. In vain they approached Hadzrat Aly with the offer of the throne. He plainly told them that they had no voice in the matter. The companions who took part in the battle of Badr were the best persons to elect a Caliph. The rebels therefore turned to these personages. At last they along with some companions of the Prophet entreated Hadzrat Aly to accept the Caliphate, saying that they could not think of a better man for the position. They further pointed out the evils that would befall the nation in consequence of his refusal. Pressed by their entreaties and representations, Hadzrat Aly consented to be the Caliph but desired that Zobeir-bin-Auwam and Talha should be consulted

in the matter. These gentlemen, when approached, expressed their willingness to accept the decision of the majority. As this answer did not satisfy Hadzrat Aly, Malek Ashtar, a rebel leader, brought the two gentlemen to the assembly, against their will. Hadzrat Aly volunteered to follow the lead of any of them if they aspired to the Caliphate. They declined the honour with the remark that it behoved none to be the Caliph as long as a man of his qualifications and claims were alive. Hadzrat Aly was thus elected Caliph on 25th of Zil Hujj, that is, a week after the murder of Hadzrat Othman. Most of the citizens present there including Talha and Zobeir swore allegiance to him.[1]

Some citizens refrained from taking the oath of allegiance.

A few of the citizens did not come forward to pay homage to the new Caliph. After the oath of Talha and Zobeir, Saad bin Abi Waqqas the victor of Qadisya was brought to the assembly and pressed for an oath of

[1] The substance of this paragraph is taken from Rowzatus Safah. Ibn Khuldun gives two versions. The first version is that Talha, Zobeir and other companions approached Hadzrat Aly with the request to accept the Caliphate. He declined the offer and expressed his willingness to swear allegiance to either Talha or Zobeir. These gentlemen refused to be Caliph while Hadzrat Aly was alive, hence the latter accepted the Caliphate. The other version is that the rebels approached successively Hadzrat Aly, Zobeir, Talha, Saad and Ibn Omar with the offer of the Caliphate. When all of them declined the honour the rebels requested the citizens to elect a Caliph within two days,

allegiance. Saad excused himself by saying that he would tender his submission after others had taken their oath. Thereupon Hadzrat Aly asked the people not to press him further. Ibn Omar acted in the same way. Ashtar, a rebel leader wanted to behead him, but Hadzrat Aly ordered him to restrain his hand. Muhammad bin Muslama, Numan bin Bashir, Zaid bin Thabit, Osama bin Zaid, Mughira bin Shaba and a few others refrained from paying homage. Numan bin Bashir escaped to Muaviya in Syria with the blood-stained shirt of Hadzrat Othman and the lopped-off fingers of his wife Naila. Some of the Omaiyads fled to Syria and others escaped to Mecca as opportunity presented itself.

The question of the punishment of the murderers of Hadzrat Othman.

Immediately after the election of Hadzrat Aly, two questions of vital importance on which hung the welfare of the Moslems awaited solution. The one was the question of the punishment of the murderer of Hadzrat Othman and the other was the confirmation or supersession of the provincial governors of the deceased Caliph. Talha and Zobeir waited upon the new Caliph and desired him to bring the regicides to

otherwise they threatened to execute some of the citizens or (according to some accounts Hadzrat Aly, Talha and Zobeir). The citizens therefore entreated Hadzrat Aly to accept the Caliphate. The account given in Rowzatussafah apparently seems to have been based upon the above different accounts.

book. Hadzrat Aly replied that he himself yielded to none in his keenness to punish the regicides and to do justice to the departed Caliph, but the time was not favourable for the execution of his plans, so he asked them to wait till order was restored. Dissatisfied with the reply they left his presence.[1] People began to discuss the matter. To remove erroneous impressions, Hadzrat Aly preached a sermon dilating upon the necessity of awarding condign punishment to the slayers of Hadzrat Othman, explaining his innocence and the necessity of postponing the matter to a later date. He ordered the Bedouin tribes still hanging in and about Medina to depart, but they heeded him not and Sabia one of their leaders threatened to create disturbance.

Appointment of Governors.

As regards the appointment of Governors, Talha and Zobeir requested Hadzrat Aly to appoint them Governor of Bussorah and Kufa respectively, but Hadzrat Aly declined to accede to their request on the ground that he would require their counsels in that critical time. Mughira advised the new Caliph not to remove the Governors till he was firmly established on the throne. Ibn Abbas, a first cousin and a sincere

[1] It is said that they took the oath of allegiance on condition that Hadzrat Aly acted according to the holy Koran, and the precedents of the Prophet, and would punish the murderers of Hadzrat Othman.

friend of the Caliph, gave the same advice. He submitted that if Muaviya and other governors were removed, they would, like the people of Medina, raise the cry of "punishment for the murder of Othman" and overthrow the government of Hadzrat Aly brave though he was; but on the other hand they could be easily dismissed when his sway was acknowledged everywhere. But alas the counsel which was perfectly sound from a politician's point of view did not commend itself to the chivalrous and upright nature of Hadzrat Aly. He recognised that the regicides had just grievances against the governors of the murdered Caliph and they stood for democracy and socialism. Though they perpetrated a horrible crime for the redress of their grievances, it was done in the heat of a struggle. Therefore in his opinion, there was some reason to postpone the punishment of the aggrieved but misguided men. But to confirm Muaviya would be to sanction those very unjust deeds which led to the rising. Hadzrat Aly was not the man to approve such a proceeding. He was prepared to risk his all, nay his life, rather than confirm Muaviya.[1] To all the reasonings of Ibn Abbas, he replied that he would give

[1] Some writers have attributed the rejection of the prudent counsel of Ibn Abbas to the self-will of Hadzrat Aly. Such could hardly be the case. Hadzrat Aly was admittedly the most learned and intelligent man among the Koreish. It is not likely that such a person

nothing but the sword to Muaviya. On the other hand he requested Ibn Abbas to be Governor of Syria but the latter asked to be excused as Muaviya was sure to kill him or to imprison him.

Having decided to remove the governors of the late Caliph, Hadzrat Aly in 36 A.H. nominated Othman bin Hanif to be the governor of Bussorah, Ommara bin Shiba of Kufa, Obaydullah bin Abbas of Yemen, Qays bin Saad of Egypt and Sohil bin Hanif of Syria. When Othman bin Hanif reached Bussorah a strong party acknowledged him as their governor. Ibn Aamir, the then incumbent prudently vacated his seat and retired to Mecca, though an equally strong party was in his favour. The rest of the population remained neutral, to watch the attitude of the Medinites. Ommara bin Shiba

would persist in disastrous self-will. It has again been suggested that his attitude towards Muaviya, in whose province of Syria no discontent existed, was due to the hatred which the Hashimites entertained towards the Omaiyads. If such were the case Ibn Abbas, a Hashimite, would have adopted the same attitude. It seems to me that the hatred which Hadzrat Aly conceived against Muaviya was neither malicious nor on account of family antipathy, but was the result of honest indignation at the unscrupulous and sordid conduct of Muaviya. It is true that the Moslems of Syria had not joined the discontented rebels, but Muaviya bribed the Moslems or treated them harshly according to the temperament of individuals and thus kept them well in hand. Muaviyan methods, though they proved successful were destructive of the principles of justice, equality and liberty for which Islam stood. It is therefore not at all strange that the attitude of Hadzrat Aly towards Muaviya was uncompromising.

on his way to Kufa met Tolaiha who forbade him to proceed to his destination as the Kufans were deadly against any change. He threatened to kill him if he dared to advance further. The governor-designate had thus to retrace his steps to Mecca. Obaydullah bin Abbas met no opposition in Yemen, but he found the Treasury empty, as Yali bin Munia the previous Governor on hearing of his approach left for Mecca with all the treasure he could lay his hands on. At Ayla Qays bin Saad the newly nominated governor of Egypt fell in with a body of cavalry from that country. Pretending that he was a partisan of the late Caliph and was in search of those who would side with him, he escaped from their sword and reached his destination in safety. Here he gave out the orders of Hadzrat Aly. Several factions grew up in Egypt. One party adhered to Qays and another desired to be neutral till the punishment of the regicides. The third faction would take no action till their comrades returned from Medina. Sohil bin Hanif in his journey towards Syria came across with a body of cavalry at Tabuk. They compelled him to return to Medina. Hadzrat Aly now sent two letters, one to Abu Musa and another to Muaviya. Abu Musa replied that through him Moslems of Kufa swore allegiance to him but Muaviya sent no reply for a long time.

Afterwards he sent a letter with a messenger who reached Medina just three months after the death of Hadzrat Othman. It was addressed "From Muaviya to Aly." When the envelope was opened no letter was found in it. Hadzrat Aly annoyed at this strange incident inquired from the envoy what it meant. The envoy replied that in Syria sixty thousand persons who had sworn vengeance for the murder of Hadzrat Othman were daily weeping over his death at the sight of his gory shirt and the mangled fingers of his wife, which were kept on the pulpit to keep the memory of the diabolical murder green. Hearing this state of things Talha and Zobeir on the pretence of performing lesser pilgrimage left for Mecca. It was now plain to Hadzrat Aly that Muaviya was prepared to fight with a strong body of determined soldiers who were thirsty for the blood of the regicides. He further knew that in other provinces also his authority was disputed. There was still time for him to consider his decision. By confirming Muaviya in his post he could with the help of the Syrians, punish the regicides and quell all disturbances throughout Arabia. Under these circumstances any man without the unparalleled courage of Hadzrat Aly would have changed his decision, but he did not recede an inch from his original plan. He began to excite the

Medinites to prepare for war with the Syrians and wrote to Kufa, Bussorah and Egypt for help.

Rising against Hadzrat Aly a-brewing in Mecca.

While Hadzrat Aly was preparing for an attack upon the Syrians a rising was a-brewing in the holy city of Mecca. Hadzrat Aysha was there on a pilgrimage, when Hadzrat Othman was besieged in Medina. After the pilgrimage was over, she left for Medina, but in the way she got the news of Hadzrat Othman's murder and the election of Hadzrat Aly to the Caliphate. For domestic reasons,[1] she had no love for Hadzrat Aly. His election to the Caliphate was perhaps too much for her.

She turned back to Mecca, swearing vengeance for the murder of Hadzrat Othman though her brother Muhammad bin Abu Bakr was one of the foremost men, who rose against the murdered Caliph. When some one reminded her that not long ago she had adversely criticised the actions of the deceased Caliph, she

[1] In 5 A. H. when the Moslem army marched back to Medina from the expedition against the Beni Mustalik, Hadzrat Aysha was accidentally left behind. Safwan who too happened to be detained seeing her plight gave her his camel, while he walked leading the animal. This incident gave rise to false and scandalous rumours. In this connection Hadzrat Aysha's maid servant was examined about her chastity, on the suggestion, it is said of Hadzrat Aly. Of course the maid servant proved her innocence but she conceived ill feeling towards Hadzrat Aly.

gave the unconvincing reply that Hadzrat Othman had repented for his past doings and promised to act rightly in the future. On her return to Mecca, she discussed the subject. Hadzrat Othman's governor of Mecca, Yali bin Munia, the ex-governor of Yemen, Abdullah bin Aamir, the ex-governor of Kufa, Walid bin Oqba and several other Omaiyads who took shelter in Mecca readily expressed their willingness to join in any movement for the punishment of the regicides. Shortly after this event Talha and Zobeir reached Mecca and joined in the movement. An expedition of three thousand men was formed for marching to Bussorah where Ibn Aamir had a strong body of supporters. In the way Sayd Bin al-Aasi and Merwan bin Hakam with their followings joined the expedition, but when Sayd learnt that a son of Hadzrat Othman would not be elected Caliph in case of victory he left the expedition with the men of the tribe of Thaqif. Merwan by an indiscreet act was about to sow discord among the party because he raised the question of leadership in the prayers. Zobeir's son pressed for his father's claim, while Talha's son stood up for the rights of his parent. Hadzrat Aysha promptly set the question at rest by deciding that Zobeir's son who was also the son of her sister Asama was to lead the prayers.

When the party reached the settlement of Khowab a strange but awful incident took place. The barkings of the dogs of the settlement led Hadzart Aysha to inquire what was the place. On learning that it was Khowab, she refused to proceed further, because the holy Prophet had foretold that woe would befall to one of his wives at whom the dogs of Khowab would bark. She made her fine camel Asker,—a gift from Yali,—sit and would not move an inch, though people tried to make her believe that the place was not Khowab. When the party stayed there a day and a night, feigned cries of "make haste, Aly is upon you" reverberated throughout the camp which at once began to move towards Bussorah. At last the party halted in the suburbs of that city. Hadzrat Aysha then wrote letters to some of the leading citizens and sent Ibn Aamir to gain over the residents. Othman bin Hanif tried to rouse the citizens to oppose the expedition but found that many were in favour of Hadzrat Aysha's party. He however instructed his adherents to arm themselves and led them to Marbad, where the expeditionary force was then encamped. The citizens who were in favour of Hadzrat Aysha also came out and arranged themselves in battle array. Talha came out of the line in front of both parties and spoke about the virtues

The barking of the dogs of Khowab.

of Hadzrat Othman and incited them to take vengeance for his murder. Zobeir supported him but the men under Othman bin Hanif contradicted both. Hadzrat Aysha next appeared on the scene and made a short but eloquent speech. Being impressed, some followers of Othman bin Hanif went over to her side and the parties began to pelt stones at each other. About this time, Hakim bin Jabla one of the rebel ringleaders arrived with his cavalry and took the offensive. The adherents of Hadzrat Aysha began to shower arrows in order to repulse the attack. Subsequently they gave up the fight in the hope that Hakim might imitate their example, but the expectation not being fulfilled they renewed their attack. The battle continued till nightfall and was resumed again in the next morning. When the number of the wounded became considerable and both parties were tired, they thought of coming to terms. The battle was suspended on the condition that a person enjoying the confidence of both parties should go to Medina and ascertain whether Talha and Zobeir took the oath of allegiance voluntarily, and if so, the expedition should leave Bussorah, otherwise Othman bin Hanif should evacuate the city. Accordingly Qazi Kaab bin Sur proceeded to Medina, convened a meeting of the citizens and inquired whether Talha and Zobeir swore allegiance voluntarily.

None gave any reply, but Osama bin Zaid said that they took the oath on compulsion. At this many men fell upon Osama and brutally assaulted him, but he was rescued by Muhammad bin Muslama and a few others. When Hadzrat Aly came to know of the object of Kaab's visit he informed Othman bin Hanif that Talha and Zobeir had no excuse whatever to desire his resignation of the Caliphate and if they had in view anything else, they would soon meet each other. For this reason Othman bin Hanif refused to evacuate Bussorah, when on the return of Kaab, Talha and Zobeir requested him to fulfil his promise. They made a sudden night attack upon the mosque, wherein were 40 persons. These men fought bravely but were killed. Thereafter some persons caught Othman in his house, pulled out his beard and brought him to Talha and Zobeir, who referred his case to Hadzrat Aysha. The good lady ordered his release.[1] Hakim bin Jabla, the rebel leader with a body of soldiers rushed to the rescue of Othman. He fought courageously but was killed. Hadzrat Aysha's party now became master of Bussorah.

[1] There are different versions about the capture and release of Othman bin Hanif. Some say that Othman was turned out of the city and others assert that he was ordered to be killed. In some versions it is again related that he was caught while conducting the prayers and was ordered to be killed, but as he was an Ansar, men tortured him and let him go.

We have seen before that Hadzrat Aly was making preparation for an expedition to Syria, but when the news of Hadzrat Aysha's adverse movement reached his holy ears, he turned his attention to this new and unexpected danger. He began to incite the Medinites to pursue the expedition, but the citizens were unwilling to proceed to the attack of such influential personages as Talha and Zobeir. Ziad bin Hanzala was the first person to volunteer his services. His example was soon emulated and the Medinites prepared themselves for an attack upon the party of Hadzrat Aysha. By the end of Rabi II Hadzrat Aly, having appointed Sohil bin Hanif and Qathem bin Abbas to be governors of the holy cities of Medina and Mecca respectively, marched towards Bussorah and encamped himself at Rabza. About 900 men of Egypt and Kufa were among his army. From here, he sent Muhammad bin Abu Bakr and Muhammad bin Jaafer to Kufa to secure recruits and himself proceeded to Ziqar where Othman bin Hanif joined him. Seeing his beardless appearance Hadzrat Aly sympathised with him and invoked the blessings of God upon him. At this place the two envoys returned unsuccessful from their mission, as Abu Musa, the governor of Kufa, strongly advised the citizens to be neutral or to attack the regicides if they would fight at all. The Caliph decided to make

another attempt and sent Ashtar and Ibn Abbas to see if they could procure soldiers from Kufa. They earnestly requested Abu Musa to render them military help but their appeal fell on deaf ears. Abu Musa urged the citizens not to stir till all differences came to an end. When these gentlemen returned from the abortive mission, the Caliph again sent his son Hasan and Ammar bin Yaser to Kufa to seek assistance. Abu Musa said that he had heard the holy Prophet say that in the feud and strife that would arise in the near future, the man keeping himself aloof would prove better than the infantry and the infantry better than the cavalry, because the life and property of the Moslems who are brothers to one another, are unlawful. Hence he counselled the Kufans to be as immoveable as the hills, till peace was restored. While the subject was being discussed in the mosque Zaid bin Suhan came there with two letters from Hadzrat Aysha, one was addressed to himself and another to the public, in which she desired the Kufans either to join her or to remain neutral. He read out one of the letters but commented adversely upon it and said that they should turn back the rising tide, meaning Hadzrat Aysha's party. Qaqaa bin Omro supported the proposition. Hadzrat Hasan rose and said that the Caliph wanted their help if his cause was right, but would make amends if he were

on the wrong. He further pointed out that Talha and Zobeir were the first to swear allegiance and were the first to break their oath. The speech of Hadzrat Hasan made an impression among the assembly. They expressed their willingness to join him. While these discussions were going on, Ashtar came to Kufa with the men of the tribes he met in the way and took possession of the governor's quarters. He drove Abu Musa's slaves and when Abu Musa himself came there, he asked him to leave the palace before sunset. Ashtar however prevented his men to plunder the property of Abu Musa or to attack his person. Shortly after this event Hazrat Hasan joined the Caliph at Zeqar with 9,000 Kufans. Hadzrat Aly now sent Qaqaa to Talha and Zobeir to persuade them to make peace. Qaqaa first visited Hadzrat Aysha and asked her what was the object of her expedition. She replied that her aim was to counsel the Moslems to the correct path and to award punishment to the regicides. Talha and Zobeir gave the same reply. Qaqaa pointed out that already they killed 600 regicides of Bussorah and thereby created 6,000 sullen souls. If they were determined to continue the fight, the tribes of Mozar and Rabia would oppose them to a man, in which event there would be no chance of leading the people to the right path. Seeing the force of the argument,

they expressed their willingness to make peace. Hadzrat Aly was agreeably surprised at the prospect of an amicable settlement but many of his followers were vitally interested to prevent such a happy termination of the feud. Ibn Sauda, Khalid bin Muljim, Ashtar, Adi bin Hatim and a few other ringleaders of the regicides met together for consultation. They came to the conclusion that if the parties came to terms each of the regicides would be carefully searched for and exterminated. Hence they decided anyhow to prevent the conclusion of peace. Unaware of the machination of these men, Hadzart Aly assembled his men and instructed them to commence march on the next morning and ordered the regicides to leave his party. At last by the middle of Jamdi II of 36 H.A. Hadzrat Aly with his men encamped himself at "Qasr Abdullah bin Ziad." The two armies were now face to face. Negotiations went on for terms of peace. Hadzrat Aly reminded Zobeir of the saying of the holy Prophet who had prophesied that Zobeir would unjustly fight with another person. Zobeir declared that he would not have started on the expedition, if he were reminded of the saying in time. On return to his camp he declined to fight on any account though his son taunted him with cowardice. Hadzrat Aly was equally anxious for peace. The terms were settled, they were now to be written

on a certain morning. But at the dawn of the appointed day the regicides commenced an attack on the men of Bussorah and falsely informed Hadzrat Aly that they were acting on the defensive. The parties now lost confidence in each other and a fierce battle raged. To minimise the horrors of a civil war, Hadzrat Aly as well as Talha and Zobeir forbade their men to pursue any fugitive or to plunder any property. On the advice of Kaab bin Sur Hadzrat Aysha came to the battle field in her camel, in the hope that her presence might lead to peace. Her partisans were by this time worsted and were retreating. Talha being fatally wounded retired to Bussorah where he breathed his last. Zobeir, true to his words, did not take part in the battle, but escaped to Wadius Sabaa, where he was subsequently murdered, when engaged in offering prayers, by Omro-binal Hurmuz. The Tragic news moved Hadzrat Aly who remarked that the murderer was sure to be condemned to hell fire. The cavalry of Hadzrat Aly now surrounded the camel of Hadzrat Aysha. Perceiving her dangerous plight, her supporters turned back and again a furious battle ensued. At her request Kaab bin Sur proceeded towards the lines of the enemy with a copy of the holy Koran to invite them to settle the dispute in accordance with the injunctions of the sacred book, but he was attacked with showers of

arrows. Being mortally wounded he fell down and died in the battle field. Hadzrat Aysha exhorted her soldiers; the battle grew fiercer and many brave soldiers on both sides laid their lives round about the camel. Under Hadzrat Aly's direction, the camel was killed and this incident sealed the fate of the battle. Hadzrat Aysha's men fled in disorder leaving the field in the hands of the opposite party. Alas this battle was the first in which Moslems fought against Moslems. It marked the commencement of a civil war which killed democracy and freedom. The loss of life was heavy on either side. About 10,000 Moslems lay in the gory field, in spite of the humane instructions of the Caliph not to pursue any fugitive. At the close of the battle, Hadzrat Aly acted with his usual generosity. He instructed Hadzrat Aysha's brother Muhamad bin Abu Bakr to remove her to Bussorah and to lodge her there in comfort. She was subsequently sent to Medina *viá* Mecca with all the honours due to her position. In her honour Hadzrat Aly himself accompanied her for a short distance. The wounded whether friends or foes were removed to Bussorah where their wants were attended to and the dead of both parties were buried with the usual prayers. Plunder was strictly forbidden and the properties found in the battle field were stored in the cathedral mosque, with instructions to the owners

to take them away. Ahnaf bin Qays who left Hadzrat Aly on the eve of the battle, now joined him with the tribe of Beni Saad. On entering Bussorah, Hadzrat Aly received the oath of allegiance from the citizens. He then appointed his cousin Ibn Abbas governor of the town; and placed Ziad in charge of the revenue and the treasury. He further divided among his soldiers the cash found in the treasury and promised to give them more on the subjugation of Syria. The strict measures adopted to prevent plunder spread discontent among the rabble of Bussorah. They were further enraged because the money found in the treasury was divided among those persons only who fought for Hadzrat Aly. Soon after these events, Jabla bin Itab and another person led a body of rabble to Sejistan. They killed Abdur Rahman bin Jarv, who was instructed by the Caliph to pursue them. Subsequently Rabi bin Qays, sent by Ibn Abbas, killed Jabla in a battle and became the governor of Sejistan.

Subjugation of Egypt and its subsequent loss.

We have seen before that Hadzrat Aly, on his succession to the Caliphate, appointed new governors for the different provinces. In this arrangement, he appointed Qays, son of the Medina chief Saad, who was about to be elected Caliph after the death of the prophet. Qays was an able and wise man. He refused

to take with him a body of soldiers, as he thought if he could not enter Egypt without the aid of those soldiers of whom the Caliph was more in need, he would not at all be able to rule there. For this reason he started with only seven companions. In the way he escaped, as seen before, from a party of hostile cavalry at Ayla by misrepresenting his object and at last reached Egypt. There he read out the orders of Hadzrat Aly appointing him Governor of Egypt and delivered a speech dealing with the excellences of the new Caliph and the duties of the Moslems to tender their submission to him. At the conclusion of the speech, most of the Egyptians swore allegiance to Qays as the representative of the Caliph. Qays then sent his officers to all the villages, except those inhabited by the persons who demanded vengeance for the murder of Hadzrat Othman. He decided not to molest them for the time being provided they on their part gave him no trouble. This state of things continued up to the "Battle of the Camel," in Jamadi II of 36 A. H. but the result of the battle caused anxiety to Muaviya. He feared an attack both from Egypt and Iraq, so he tried to win over Qays with alluring promise or to cow him down with threats. But Qays was firm in his loyalty. Neither the allurements nor the threats had any effect. Muaviya being baffled in his base attempts

falsely gave out that Qays was friendly to him. When the rumour reached Hadzrat Aly he did not believe it, but Obaidullah bin Jaafar, a relative of Mohammad bin Abu Bakr advised him to replace Qays by a thoroughly loyal man, *viz.*, Mohammad bin Abu Bakr. While this matter was under consideration a letter from Qays reached Hadzrat Aly. In it he informed the Caliph that on the ground of expediency he had left alone those who refrained from swearing allegiance but kept quiet. The Caliph on the advice of Obaidullah instructed Qays to crush the persons of that category, even though they did not give trouble, lest they might become formidable hereafter. Qays wrote back pointing out the advantages of his action, but his meaning was misunderstood. Mohammad bin Abu Bakr was sent out to Egypt to supersede Qays who returned to Medina with a just grievance. Here Merwan bin Hakam, the evil genius of Hadzrat Othman, held out threats to him; hence he went over to Hadzrat Aly who accepted his explanation and took him into his confidence. Henceforth Qays became one of the chief advisers of the Caliph. When Muaviya heard of the incident he became extremely annoyed with Merwan, because he regarded the wisdom of Qays far more valuable than the aid of a lac of soldiers.

When Mohammad bin Abu Bakr sent out a force to punish the recusant persons who had

not sworn allegiance but had entered into a compact with Qays, it met with a disaster. He sent a second force but it fared no better. These defeats encouraged the party under Muaviya bin Hadij and Muslema bin Mukhalled who insisted on the punishment of the regicides. They began to attack Mohammad bin Abu Bakr from all sides. Hadzrat Aly now saw that none but a wise, experienced and firm man could save the situation. He therefore ordered Ashtar to proceed to Egypt and take charge of its government. Unfortunately Ashtar died immediately on reaching the country.[1] Now the Caliph had no other alternative but to confirm Mohammad bin Abu Bakr and to instruct him to be firm. He further advised him to lead the insurgents towards God by wise counsels, and promised to send military help, but no reinforcement could start for Egypt in time. These unfavourable circumstances gave Muaviya an oppurtunity to conquer Egypt. He sent Amr-ul-Aas with 6,000 soldiers for the purpose. This astute diplomat secured the co-operation of the partisans of Hadzrat Othman. The force sent by Mohammad bin Abu Bakr was defeated and he himself was made a prisoner and killed. Thus Egypt became a part of the dominion of Muaviya in 38 A. H.

[1] This event took place after the battle of Siffin. Some historians say that Ashtar was poisoned at the instigation Muaviya, but there is no satisfactory evidence to this effect.

After the capture of Bussorah, and the discomfiture of his enemies in that quarter, Hadzrat Aly turned his attention to Syria. With this object in view he proceeded to Kufa whence he again sent an envoy to Muaviya inviting him to swear allegiance. As the envoy returned unsuccessful, the Caliph proceeded to Nakhila where with repeated exhortations he assembled an army. Ibn Abbas joined him at this place with the contingent from Bussorah. Sending an advance guard under Ziad bin Nadzar and Sharih bin Hani, the Caliph marched to Raqqa *viâ* Madain. At Raqqa he crossed the Euphrates. Here he was joined by Ziad and Sharih who were ordered to push forward. When the two Lieutenants reached the skirts of Asia Minor, they came in contact with a portion of the Syrian force under Abul Awur. Hearing of the enemy Hadzrat Aly sent Ashtar to their help, with the instruction not to take the offensive first. Abul Awur however made an attack. The engagement lasted for two days without any decisive result in spite of the bravery of Ashtar. Hadzrat Aly now came up with the main body of his army and instructed Ashtar to march towards Muaviya, but the latter came up and cut off Hadzrat Aly's water supply from the Euphrates. The Caliph sent words to Muaviya to allow his army to have access to the river adding that he

The battle of Siffin.

came to hear his objections and to call him to the path of rectitude and not to fight. Muaviya did not accede to the request, hence a severe struggle took place for the command of the river. Among others, Ashas bin Qays, Shibt bin Rabi and Ashtar on the one side and Abul Awur and Amr-ul-Aas on the other side took part in the engagement, which ended in favour of Hadzrat Aly. With usual magnanimity the Caliph allowed the army of Muaviya to draw water from the river, though ere long his own army had been denied the same privilege. For two days, the contending armies lay encamped in front of each other without any action. On the first of Zul Hijja 36 A. H., the Caliph sent some envoys to persuade Muaviya to render submission. Hot words passed between them and Muaviya. The mission returned unsuccessful. For fear of awful disaster to the Moslems none was anxious to bring about a general engagement. Only skirmishes took place throughout the month. During the sacred month of Moharram hostilities were suspended in the hope that some compromise might be effected. The Caliph again sent a deputation to Muaviya requesting him not to create discord among the Moslems and asking him to render homage. As usual the deputation returned unsuccessful. Muaviya in his turn sent a mission to the Caliph asking him to resign and to allow the Moslems to elect

any man whom they pleased. The regicides were at the same time to be handed over to Muaviya. Hadzrat Aly indignantly rejected these unfair terms. Skirmishes again took place for seven days but on the 8th day of Safar of 37th Hegira a general engagement commenced. The army of Hadzrat Aly was 50,000 strong. Abdullah bin Badil commanded the right wing and Abdullah bin Abbas the left wing. Hadzrat Aly was in the centre with the citizens of Medina. Muaviya sat in a gorgeous tent, surrounded by five rows of men who swore to conquer or to die. Next to these men was his main army protected by the cavalry of Damascus. Ibn Badil delivered a spirited attack upon the left wing of the enemy under Habib bin Moslema. A fierce struggle lasted up to midday. In the afternoon Ibn Badil again commenced a tremendous attack with all the force under his command. Habib had to yield ground, but Muaviya sent to his aid the men who swore to die. These men made a desperate attack. The lines of Ibn Badil were broken, many took to their heels, but the brave commander with a handful of men continued to fight. At the instance of the Caliph, Ashtar rallied the retreating soldiers, collected about 900 brave men from Hamdan who took the pledge of death. With these men and the tribe of Mazhaj Ashtar hurled himself against the left wing of Muaviya forcing them to retreat. By this

means he effected a junction with the handful of men fighting under the brave Ibn Badil. In spite of the advice of Ashtar Ibn Badil pushed forward but he was overwhelmed and killed. Ashtar made another assault and decimating four out of the five rows of Muaviya's body-guard reached very close to his position. Being taken aback by this bold feat, Muaviya rode on his horse, ready to run away, if necessary. The left wing of Hadzrat Aly met with vicissitudes of fortune. The Modzer forming a part of the left wing of the Caliph were defeated but the Rabia among whom were Hadzrat Hasan and Hussain retained their ground tenaciously. The Homir of the Syrian army, among whom were Abdullah bin Omar bin Khattab and their leader Zul Kula, made a vigorous attack upon the Rabia, a portion of whom took to their heels. The Abdul Qays came to the aid of the Rabia and turned the tide of events. Zul Kula and Abdullah bin Omar were killed. Ammar bin Yaser now issued forth from the ranks and with a body of soldiers and companions made a daring attack upon the enemy and reached the position held by Amr-al-Aas. He asked Amr-al-Ass if he forgot that the Holy Prophet foretold that Ammar would be killed by a body of rebels.[1] This speech had a

[1] This incident has been described by Sir William Muir in his History of the Caliphs. Ibn Khuldun does not mention Amr-al-Aas's reply.

damping effect upon the soldiers of Amr-al-Aas though he tried to assure them that Hadzrat Aly would be responsible for Ammar's death because he brought him to the battle. Ammar pushed on but unfortunately he fell a victim to his wonderful intrepidity. At this stage Hadzrat Aly made an impetuous assault, broke the lines of the Syrian army and reached the position held by Muaviya, whom he challenged to a single combat which the latter dared not accept. The battle continued furiously throughout the night. The Caliph moved about among his army appealing to them to make a supreme effort. At dawn the whole army was fully engaged. Ashtar incited the cavalry and made such a spirited attack that the Syrian army began to retreat. In fact, Ashtar reached the camp of the enemy. Amr-al-Aas, the astute politician now perceived that the game was lost. To avoid an utter defeat, he advised Muaviya to instruct his men to raise the holy Koran on their lances and to cry out "This book is between us and you." Evidently the meaning of the act was that the enemy were willing to abide by a decision according to the holy book. This ruse had the desired effect. The bulk of Hadzrat Aly's followers were unruly fanatics with theocratic ideas. They were fighting not for their allegiance to the Caliph but to save their own skin, because many of them were

implicated in the murder of Hadzrat Othman. The appeal to the Koran caught their imagination. Their leaders Masaar bin Fadak Tamimi and Zaid bin Husain-at-Taii threatened to depose the Caliph if the proposed arbitration were not accepted. They compelled him to recall Ashtar and to stop all hostilities. Ashath bin Qays, went to Muaviya to inquire what he meant by uplifting the holy book. Muaviya suggested that arbitrators might be appointed by both parties to decide the dispute according to the injunctions of the holy book. Ashath bin Qays readily accepted the suggestion. The Syrians selected Amr-al-Aas to be their representative. Ashath and his party nominated Abu Musa Ashari as their agent. Hadzrat Aly refused to accept Abu Musa Ashari, because he had to depose him from the governorship of Kufa for his lukewarmness. The Caliph suggested the names of Ibn Abbas and Ashatar but the fanatics would not have them, hence the Caliph was obliged to acquiesce in the nomination of Abu Musa Ashari. The arbitrators were to give their decision in the month of Ramdzan or later at Dumat-al-Jundal or Azrah. An agreement to this effect was drawn up on 17th Safar 37 A.H. Hadzrat Aly with the main body of his force returned to Kufa, but 12,000 fanatics did not follow his lead. They encamped themselves at Harura, not far from Kufa. They

held that allegiance is due to none but God and that it was their duty to lead men to virtuous path and to save them from sins. In their view the submission of the dispute to the arbitration of two men was an act against the teachings of the Koran. They therefore decided to establish by force of arms a government by council. Addressing these men, Hadzrat Aly pointed out that he himself had been averse to arbitration, but they had forced it upon him. He further observed that the holy book was his authority as well as theirs, but as it did not speak, men were necessary to govern according to its principles. The reasonings of the Caliph appealed to the better sense of the fanatics. One of their leader, Yezid bin Qays, was also conciliated by the offer of the governorship of Rai and Ispahan. Accordingly these men at last returned to Kufa. The arbitrators now met at the appointed time. Each of them came accompanied by 400 men. Amr-al-Aas tried to gain over Abu Musa Ashari by offering the office of a governor if he decided in favour of Muaviya. Abu Musa indignantly rejected the base offer, but proposed to elect Abdullah bin Omar as Caliph. This proposal did not find favour with Amr-al-Aas, who now suggested the name of his son. Abu Musa could not accept this suggestion. At last they agreed to depose both Muaviya and Hadzrat Aly and to allow the Moslems to elect whom they

liked. According to this understanding Abu Musa declared his decision to the eager public. But the treacherous and astute Amr-al-Aas said that Abu Musa had deposed both Caliphs, but he confirmed the deposition of Aly and elected Muaviya as he was the lawful heir of Hadzrat Othman. This treacherous decision enraged the partisans of Hadzrat Aly. Sharih bin Hani, commander of the escort of Iraq, attacked Amr-al-Aas with his sword. The latter retaliated but men interfered and averted a serious conflict. Amr-al-Aas returned to Syria but Abu Musa proceeded to Mecca.[1] On the 10th of Shawwal, the Kharijis selected Abdullah bin Ohab [2] to be their commander and swore allegiance to him. To avoid suspicion, they left in small groups and proceeded towards Neharwan. Hadzrat Aly instructed Saad bin Masud, the governor of Madain to stop the Kharijis.[2] The governor started with 500 men, overtook the Kharijis and attacked them.

[1] Mir Khond says that when the news reached Hadzrat Aly, he was offering his prayers. He cursed Muaviya, and his principal supports. Muaviya in his turn began to imprecate Hadziat Aly and his children in public prayers. In this way the public prayers for some time became unfortunately disgraced with curses. Ibn-al-Athir thinks that the story of mutual curses has no foundation in truth.

[2] The Kharijis were the theocratic fanatics, whose object was to establish government by a council who would conduct the affairs of state in strict accordance with the Koran. They held that God alone was competent to issue orders and for this reason they would not appoint any Caliph. They also held the idea of absolute equality. They were called Kharijis because they issued forth with the idea of fighting with the Caliph.

But soon night intervened. Under the cover of darkness Abdullah bin Ohab with his companions crossed the Tigris and joining with the other Kharijis proceeded towards Neharwan. Here 500 men from Bassorah under the leadership of Masaar bin Fadak Tamimi swelled the ranks of the Kharijis. Hadzrat Aly now thought of attacking the Kharijis and with this object he obtained oath from his followers. Shortly after this event, the news of the decision of the umpires reached him. Thereupon he delivered a sermon showing that the decision was neither unanimous nor according to the holy book. He then exhorted his hearers to wage war upon the Syrians. He also appealed to the Kharijis to join him in the contemplated war with the common enemy. Their reply was characteristic of their fanaticism. They said that the Caliph had become infidel in submitting the case to arbitration but expressed their willingness to help him, if he admitted his guilt and repented for his sins. Under these circumstances, it was useless to try again to gain over the Kharijis. The Caliph wrote to Ibn Abbas to recruit soldiers in the camping ground of Nakhila. Only 3,100 soldiers out of a fighting force of 60,000 volunteered. The recruits were sent to Hadzrat Aly, who had better luck in Kufa. With the co-operation of the chiefs of several tribes, he obtained 57,000 soldiers and 8,000 camp

followers. He had intended to leave the Kharijis alone for the moment and to march upon Syria, but before he started for the campaign it was reported that Abdullah bin Khobab and some of his companions were cruelly murdered by the Kharijis. A messenger was sent to enquire into the truth of the report but he too was put to death. On account of these incidents the army of Hadzrat Aly was loath to proceed towards Syria leaving their homes unprotected and the Kharijis in the rear. With full concurrence of the army, the Caliph marched upon the Kharijis and proclaimed amnesty to those who would return to his camp, or keep away from the battle or proceed to Kufa or Bussorah. About 4,000 persons took advantage of the proclamation and only 1,800 men showed fight. They were attacked and almost annihilated. Abdullah bin Ohab, Zaid bin Husain at Taii, Narqus bin Zoher Sadi, Sharih bin Aufi and several other notorious Khariji leaders fell down in the field of Neharwan. This battle over, the Caliph expressed his intention to attack Syria. His army on the other hand clamoured for home and rest. He was therefore obliged to retrace his steps to Nakhila where he ordered his men not to leave the camp, but the injunction fell upon heedless ears. Most of the soldiers left the camp and went home. In vain

Hadzrat Aly tried to persuade the people to undertake a war against Egypt, and in vain he used strong language for the purpose. All his exhortations and denunciations had no effect on the people in general. Thus the attempt of an immediate advance upon Syria fell through, though the idea was constantly present in the mind of the Caliph. After the battle of Siffin Muaviya continued to gather strength, while Hadzrat Aly became more handicapped on account of the lukewarmness of his followers and spread of Khariji doctrines. In spite of his best efforts he could not at once raise an army sufficient for the invasion of Syria. On the other hand Muaviya in 38 A. H. captured Egypt as noticed before. This incident produced a damping effect upon the spirit of the Caliph.[1] In the year 39 A. H. Muaviya sent an expedition under Numan bin Bashir to Ain Tamar where Malik bin Kaab was the governor on behalf of Hadzrat Aly. At the approach of the Syrian army, most of Malik's men took to their heels. Malik with a handful of men sought shelter in the fort and appealed to the Caliph for help. The Caliph tried to procure some men, but the Kufans did not respond to his call. At last Malik attempted to cut his way through the enemy. The

[1] This paragraph has been based on Rowzat-us-Sofah. Ibn Khuldun is silent on the point.

struggle lasted till evening when Numan seeing some troops come to the help of Malik, retreated towards Syria. Similarly Muaviya sent Sufian bin Auf with six thousand men to Hit, from which place Sufian attacked Anbar and plundered the town. The Caliph was so much incensed at the news, that he set out alone to punish the outrage. The next day the notables of Kufa persuaded him to return. Qays bin Saad was sent with some troops to attack Sufian, who retreated in haste with the plunder. Muaviya next despatched Abdullah bin Saad alQurary to collect tithes from the people inhabiting the desert and Tyam a town on the border of the desert adjoining Syria. He was also instructed to proceed to Mecca and Medina for the same purpose. Hadzrat Aly sent Musab with two thousand men to oppose Abdullah bin Saad who being defeated retreated to Syria. Dzohak bin Qays, a lieutenant of Muaviya, was commissioned to put to the sword the adherents of Hadzat Aly living in the desert and to prevent them from making the pilgrimage of Mecca on the ground that they had no Emir to lead them. Dzohak carried plunder and murder wherever he came across the adherents of the Caliph, but he was put to flight by Hajor bin Ady al Kindy who was sent by the Caliph to oppose Dzohak. In this year Muaviya came in person to Mosul with the

ostensible object of seeing the Tigris but his real intention was to demonstrate that he could with impunity enter into the territory of the Caliph.

In 39 A. H. Muaviya sent Abdullah bin Hadzrami to Bussorah in order to win over the disaffected who demanded vengeance for the murder of Hadzrat Othman. Ibn Hadzrami first approached the tribe of Tamim, where the disaffected flocked round him. He read out to them the letter of Muaviya which held forth the promise of an increase to the stipends of all, who would join in the demand for the punishment of the Regicides. Zaid, the acting governor of Bussorah, fled to a friendly tribe taking with him the cash in the Treasury. There he raised an army and informed the Caliph of the state of affairs. The Caliph sent Ain bin Dzabia to drive out Ibn Hadzrami from the tribe of Tamim. Ibn Hadzrami's adherents opposed Ain but they were defeated and Ibn Hadzrami was killed. The faction however remained. Taking advantage of the prevailing disorder, the Persians turned out their governor Sohil bin Hanif. By command of the Caliph Ibn Abbas sent Zaid bin Samia with a large force for the subjugation of Persia. The Persians opposed Zaid but being defeated, they tendered submission. He reduced Kerman and then made Istakhar his seat of government. His rule proved highly successful.

In 40 A.H. Muaviya sent to the Hejaz a detachment of troops under Basar bin Artat to secure allegiance to himself. At his approach Abu Ayub, the governor of Medina took to his heels. Basar upbraided the citizens for the murder of the venerable Caliph Othman and made them swear allegiance to Muaviya on pain of death. In Mecca the same scene was repeated. Pressing onwards to Yemen he put to the sword numerous adherents of Hadzrat Aly. Obedullah bin Abbas, the governor of Yemen, took refuge with Hadzrat Aly, leaving behind his two minor sons, who were killed by the tyrant. Hadzrat Aly sent a force of 4,000 men to repel the raid and punish the raiders, but Basar managed to get back to Syria before the force could fall upon him. Hadzrat Aly's troops in their turn executed many men of Najran who belonged to the opposite party. The citizens of Mecca and Medina were compelled to retract their oath of allegiance to Muaviya and to do homage again to Hadzrat Aly. There was thus no peace in the country. At the top of all these misfortunes and human miseries, a rupture took place between the Caliph and his friend, adviser and nearest kisman, Ibn Abbas, the governor of Bassorah. One day Ibn Abbas expressed his displeasure with Abul Aswad who retaliated by reporting to Hadzrat Aly that the governor misappropriated public

money. The Caliph informed Ibn Abbas of the charge, who replied that the allegation had no foundation in truth. Hadzrat Aly again inquired how he acquired the money he had. This inquiry mortified Ibn Abbas. He gave up his post and went over to Mecca carrying with him his fortune. In this year Hadzrat Aly recruited a large force and obtained promise of death from 40,000 soldiers, but before he could lead the army against Syria, his noble life was cut short by the hand of an assassin. In the Hejaz three Kharijas, *viz.*, Abdullah bin Muljam Muradi of Egypt, Barik bin Abdullah Tamimi *alias* Hujjaj and Amro bin Bakr Tamimi Saadi conspired together to murder Hadzrat Aly, Muaviya and Amr-al-Aas respectively on the 17th of Ramzan. Barik failed in his attemp to take the life of Muaviya at the time of the morning prayer. He inflicted an wound but it was not fatal. Barik was arrested and executed. Accidentally Amr-al-Aas did not come to conduct the prayers that morning but sent a representative who was taken to be Amr-al-Aas and was murdered by Amro bin Bakr. The murderer could not escape. He was caught and beheaded. Most unfortunately the venture of the third man proved more successful. Ibn Muljam came to Kufa and persuaded Shabib bin Shajrah Ashjaii to help him in his diabolical deed by arguing that the Caliph merited death

on account of the lives of many innocent men who fell in the battle of Neharwan. An additional incentive to the horrible crime soon made its appearance. In Kufa Muljam saw an extremely handsome woman whose father and brother had lost their lives in the battle of Neharwan. Ibn Muljam proposed for the hands of the woman who demanded the head of Hadzrat Aly for her dowry. Ibn Muljam readily consentd to this. The woman procured the assistance of a man named Wardun belonging to her tribe of Tamim. In the fatal night, which was the night of a Friday, the three conspirators of Kufa concealed themselves in the mosque, near the gate, through which Hadzrat Aly used to enter. As soon as the noble Caliph appeared in the mosque Shabib aimed a cut with his sword, but he missed the mark. Hadzrat Aly proceeded forward when Ibn Muljam inflicted a deadly wound on the front part of the holy head. The Caliph fell down, Shabib escaped; Wardun escaped home, where the enraged public, to whom he confessed his guilt, put him to death. Ibn Muljam was arrested and confined. The wounded Caliph was carried home. On his deathbed the magnanimous Caliph directed that if his wound proved fatal, Ibn Muljam should be executed, but not with cruelty. Turning to his sons, Hadzrat Imam Hasan and Imam Hussain he enjoined them to spurn the

world and to accept failures in worldly matters without any regret. Addressing the public he said he gave the Moslems full discretion to elect in his place Imam Hasan or not. At the close of these necessary instructions his holy spirit ascended to heaven in the contemplation of the Divine Father.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE CONCLUSION

Hadzrat Aly was a stout full-bellied but short-statured person of tawny complexion. Though bald, he wore a large beard and had a smiling appearance. He had the rare distinction of being born in the holy temple of Kaaba and the unique advantage of being brought up by the noble Prophet himself, who once declared him to be his brother, his legatee and his representative.

He was noted for his intelligence, learning and wisdom. He learnt the sacred Koran from the divine Apostle and knew when and where each verse was revealed. As a lawyer and judge, he had no rival. He had always easy solutions of all difficult questions. Hence the great Caliph Omar used to say "Omar would be ruined if Aly were not present; in all difficult matters, Omar seeks the help of God, when Aly is not present." He was also a poet of higher order and the father of Arabic grammar.

Like all early heroes of Islam, he led a simple life. When he first came to Medina, he used to earn his livelihood by his own labour. He was a strictly upright custodian of the public money. Once he refused to give help from the state treasury to his brother Aqil, before the appointed time. This impartial and just act drove Aqil to approach Muaviya who used to lavish gold upon the partisans of Hadzrat Aly in order to gain them over.

He did away with the principles of priority in faith, proximity in birth to the Prophet and good personal service, in distributing the public revenue and established absolute equality in this matter. All Moslems irrespective of their rank and ability, used to get equal shares in the distribution of the public money.

Over and above the qualities of the head and heart, he possessed moral and physical courage to an extraordinary degree. As a boy he showed uncommon courage, when in an assembly of elders, he alone stood up to support the Prophet in the arduous task of spreading Islam. Whenever challenged to a duel, he invariably defeated his adversary. He fought as a brave soldier in the battles of Badr, Ohad and the Trench. In the last of these battles he killed in a duel Amr bin Abd Wad, who was match for one thousand men. In the campaign against Khaybar he reduced the strong fort of Qamus, which

no other man could accomplish. He pulled out the gate of the fort and used it as his shield though eight persons could hardly lift the same. Feats like these earned for him the title of "the Lion of God."

Brave, wise and honest, he spurned diplomacy. For this very reason on his accession to the Caliphate he decided to dismiss Muaviya and other governors of his predecessor for their improper conduct though he fully understood that the course he adopted was highly perilous. The path to righteousness is always rough and difficult. This bold but just step landed him in civil war and in a conflict with Muaviya, the powerful governor of Syria. It also placed him in the hands of the fickle, unruly and fanatic Bedouin population of Kufa and Bussorah who were jealous of Koreishite supremacy. With this bad material, he managed to gain a victory against Muaviya at Siffin. But the diplomacy of Amr-al-Aas and the unruliness of his followers deprived him of the fruits of that victory. Henceforth he had also to fight with a section of his own followers, the Kharijas who broke into open rebellion. Still he did not yield, but maintained an unequal contest to the end of his life. This heroic stand extorts our admiration.

His mild but just rule based on the principle of absolute equality of man was unsuitable

to the then progress of the Arab, nay it is unsuitable even to some of the best and most advanced nations of the present day. This is the root cause of his failure, as a Caliph. Truly it has been remarked that he came before his time. May peace be on his soul.

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